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# JEWISH DREAMS AND REALITIES

CONTRASTED WITH

ISLAMITIC AND CHRISTIAN CLAIMS.

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BY

HENRY ILIOWIZI, 1850-1911

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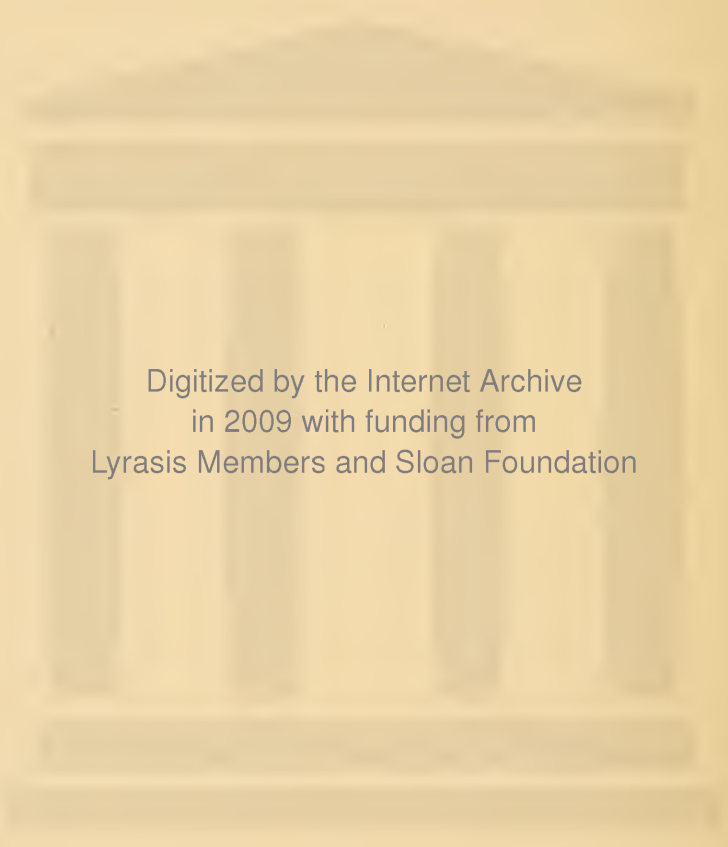
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# Dedication.

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LOVINGLY INSCRIBED  
TO THE  
SAINTED MEMORY  
OF  
MY BLESSED PARENTS,  
ELIJAH AND DINAH.

H. I.



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## PREFACE.

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A PERUSAL of this work will, it is hoped, sufficiently justify its *raison d'être*. We are not aware that the modernized Goliath, Jeroboam, and Apion have condescended to offer the Jew an apology for rough treatment. We shall, however, let our readers judge whether, in our critical strictures, we for one moment have deviated from the beaten highway pointed out by historical facts. We have earnestly endeavored to give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's; but we have not hesitated in restoring to Jehovah what is unquestionably His. Let there be no doubt as to the relation of Judaism to mankind. In the interest of truth and justice we should combine our efforts to repel baneful aggression, to clear the Jewish name of calumny, define our position as the lineal descendants of the patriarchs, and emphatically reiterate our message to the race. As faithful Jews our mission is great and glorious. The pressing duty of the hour is to teach the son of Israel to know and respect himself, to distinguish between the humane and the inhuman non-Jew, and to live up to the ideas and the ideals of an illustrious ancestry. A plain statement of "Jewish Dreams and Realities" contrasted with "Islamitic and Christian Claims," while it is likely to strike here and there a discordant note in the heart of intolerant zealotism, may at the same time contribute to strengthen that growing cordiality which of late brightens the intercourse between progressive Judaism and enlightened Christianity.

In writing these pages fairness, candor, and veracity have been steadily kept in view. Whether justice has been done to all topics touched upon is not for us to decide. A general but brief survey naturally precludes exhaustive treatment. Our claim rises no higher than to have satisfied a good motive; and whatever the effect this book may produce on the reader, its industrious elaboration has left the author a happier son of his race.

H. I.

PHILADELPHIA, March, 1890.



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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

Not very long ago an enterprising editor of a periodical caused many a spiritual light to think out some plausible reason, why he chose to be the votary of his particular creed, instead of adhering to any other. So it came to pass that a representative of the olden faith was requested to state unequivocally, Why he was a Jew. He gave his reason, and the Jewish and non-Jewish press disseminated his precious statement as a piece of information on a subject on which information is rather scarce, and, what is more to be regretted, not much in demand. For, to tell the unvarnished truth, the number of Jews who know why they are Jews is considerably less than those who do not know whether it is wise to belong to a minority who, in matters ethical and spiritual, often differ widely from the vast majority; whether the differences are insurmountable, and wherein they consist. These questions we propose to answer to the best of our ability by sketching Jewish ideals, dreams, and realities, with critical references to kindred religions which are advancing superior claims. Every civilized nation is making strenuous efforts to inspire its rising generation, by acquainting youth with the glorious achievements of its past. The modern Jew alone seems to furnish an exception. It is useless to hide sores and ignore facts. The time when from Dan to Beer-Sheba there was not a faithless, ignorant Israelite, is a sweet vision of the past. At present we have to encounter both ignorance and infidelity, and our every endeavor must be in the direction of enlightenment.

Let there be light. Let the Jew study his history and literature, let him realize his grave responsibility toward his fellow-man. Ancient Greece had Homer's songs compiled, and caused



them to be taught in schools and recited in public places. Virgil's great poems on the foundation of Carthage and Rome were the song and glory of the old Roman, and proved the inspiration of Italy's greatest bard, Dante. The Chinese delight in reciting the moral sayings of Confucius. How many Jews are prepared to recite the Ten Commandments, are conversant with the golden rules of our Scriptures? The Germans have, of late, enlarged the bounds of their magnificent literature by olden epics, weird tales of the Nibelungen, telling of Siegfried's adventures, of Chriemhild's and Brunhild's jealousy and vengeance, and of Hagen's desperate valor. Even semi-barbarous Russia is gathering wondrous legends similar to the *Sagas* of ancient Scandinavia, all calculated to throw lustre on the present and serve as an example for the emulation of posterity. The Roman's highest distinction was to be a Roman. The son of Albion is proud of his nationality. American blood thrills at the sight of the stars and the stripes. The Catholic and Protestant parade the symbols of their faith before the world, and send their missionaries to the ends of earth. But there are Jews, so-called enlightened Jews, who neither know their God nor their history; who represent nothing, live for nothing in this world; and would, were it possible, alter their very features to hide their parentage. If we cannot change this class, we should embrace every opportunity to remind them of the filial debt they owe to heroic forefathers and the risk to which they expose their children by allowing them to grow up like weeds, breaking every association with a history of four thousand years.

We have a brilliant heirloom to boast of. Our ideal Judaism is synonymous with immutable truth. Shall we tacitly allow inferior influences to supersede the Divinest of ideals? Forbid it God, that we lay ourselves open to the charge of such a base ignominy. We should not hesitate to emphasize our claim, that mankind is everlastingly indebted for its highest blessings to the eternal race. Facts there are to sustain our position. Judaism is invaded from within and from without, and the time has come for us to speak plainly. We have been wronged, are being wronged, and Jewish manhood requires us to protest, to



say why we are Jews, instead of being Christians or Moslems. Our object is less to show the weaknesses of our daughter creeds, than to exhibit some of the rare, transcendent beauties of our unalloyed faith.

Instead of following the paved road of strict system and method, we are going to imitate the bee in hurrying from flower to flower, gathering the honey from each petal, then serve it up freely to all who desire to partake thereof. Our embarrassment is flowery exuberance, which makes choice difficult. The kingdom of our God embraces all the Edens and all the stars, all the precious mines and all the treasure-houses. To which store, to which jewel, give preference above the others? There is such an abundance of wonder-things in the immense vault we are on the point of entering, that the eye is dazzled by the splendor of the inestimable hoards, and the mind shrinks from the idea of computation. Thus let us, unchained by time-honored regularity, sweep, as the eye does, from the Orion to the Zodiac, from the Lesser Bear to the Greater Bear, thence to the other constellations, and finally lose ourselves in the nebulae of the Milky Way, where, according to the sky-reading Herschel, there are at least twenty million suns, each one warming and sustaining a group of planets and satellites, yet in all making up but a limited number in the immensity of the heavenly hosts.

We deem it prudent, however, to enter that sacred vault from a side door, not from fear to avail ourself of the grand main portal, but simply to satisfy an individual penchant, that ever chooses the side prospective as the proper view to start with. A fair survey of the matter in all its lights and bearings will necessitate frequent change of aspect, the standpoint always remaining, however, within the periphery of which Judaism is the centre.



## CHAPTER II.

### MOHAMMED'S SINGULAR DREAM.

THE brilliant but ferociously aggressive Thomas Carlyle was no particular admirer of Jews, whom, among other charges, he gravely accuses of poverty in the quality of humor, which he justly considers indispensable to greatness. Among great Hebrews he, therefore, finds no hero worthy of his worship. Carlyle tried hard to steer clear of the difficulty of excluding the Jew from his Parthenon of heroes. Nor did he ever miss a chance to deal the Semite an effective blow. It is sincerely hoped that the deep but uncharitable Carlyle, in his aversion to the descendants of Shem, was consistent enough to refuse to bend the knee before Jesus, whose emphatic claim was to be the Jew of the Jews; an honor his ancient brethren respectfully denied. However, in kneeling before Mohammed, Carlyle is doing violence to his consistency and sincerity by ignoring the fact that Islam is the cunning fabric of the prophet's private secretary, the humorous Jew, Habdallah; not to forget the hitherto unrefuted assertion, that on his mother's side the founder of the Mosque was actually a Jew. Why does that honest author pass over all this in silence? Having seen one Jew raised to the dignity of a god, and many others canonized and worshiped as saints, we are perfectly willing to yield the half or the whole of the "last prophet" to whomsoever it pleases to claim him, bodily or otherwise. But when all essential facts are dilated upon, why are the Jewish secretary and mother of Mohammed not even mentioned? The erratic Scotchman, we suspect, knew all about it, but he grudged us the honor, and we forgive him this small error, having warmed our heart with the rays of his eccentric genius. Peace be with you, brave Thomas. Our cause is undamaged. Christianity and Mohammedism are

there, and Judaism was there long before and is there still, challenging comparison. We state an indisputable fact when we say, that neither Jesus nor Mohammed originally claimed any higher mission than that of merely reforming the faith of Abraham and Moses; and we are not unprepared to show that every deviation was an afterthought dictated by policy. We are about to analyze Mohammed's celebrated vision, as an instance of the patchwork of which Islam is made up. If Jesus had a special love for those who are "poor in spirit," Mohammed was one of them; for in order to teach him to read, the angel Gabriel had to adopt the singular method of knocking him down thrice and pulling him up again, an angelic method which leaves one in doubt whether it is not better to be educated by man rather than by angels. The serious objection to that kind of compulsory education is that in the prophet's case it signally failed. Mohammed never learned to read well, in which particular he is the peer of the first Evangelical teachers, all of whom gloried in their illiteracy, especially John, who was the favorite of Jesus.

Jacob's ladder is one of the most beautiful allegories known. Fleeing from the vengeance of Esau, Jacob finds himself alone in the wilderness, where, with a stone as his pillow and heaven's canopy as his roof, he, uneasy in mind, lies down to sleep, and has a marvelous dream. A ladder bridges over the boundless space which separates earth from the stars; angels are ascending and descending, while from the ladder's top the Lord utters one of the sweetest promises human ear ever heard: Jacob's descendants shall spread in all directions, east, west, north, and south, and be the blessing of the race. The meaning of this dream a child can see. The God of the patriarchs is to be one day the Lord of all men, and Israel's seed is destined to spread the Monotheistic faith, thus redeeming the world from barbarism and idolatry.—Equally beautiful and pregnant is the tradition that Moses spent forty days and forty nights in the skies in order to secure the Law for Israel, neither drinking nor eating, but engaged in deep meditation and in discussion with angels, who were sorry to see the *Thorah* go down to earth; meaning that all the precious

things contained in the Pentateuch were dear and sacred to the powers above.—Ezekiel, in his first vision, on the banks of the river Chebar, in the land of the Chaldeans, where, among the exiles, the inspiration of The Lord comes over him, gives us this mystic picture of the Divine Presence: He sees a storm-wind break forth from the north, followed by a mighty cloud, a flaming fire, and a great effulgence, in the midst of which the likeness of four seraphim is visible, each one having four wings and four faces—these representing the face of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle; they move conjointly with animated wonder-wheels of the color of the crystallite, with the appearance as “though it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.” A vault of purest crystal rises over their heads; above the vault stands a throne of sapphire, and upon it, wrapt in overpowering glory, is “the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.” From that throne of Divine effulgence the prophet receives his charge. This vision is at the bottom of Kabbalistic Theosophy.

The Talmud, of which we shall say more hereafter, contains fabulous allegories hyperbolically told, which the wise alone understand. What is known as the *Haggadah* is a deep mythology, which causes the fool to laugh and the thinker to wonder. A distinguished teacher in Israel tells, in *Baba Bathra*, some startling tales, which are elsewhere very ingeniously interpreted. While sailing on the high seas, he saw an ocean monster, a fish of such prodigious magnitude that, though the vessel swept onward with the velocity of an arrow, it required three days and three nights to sail between the upper and lower fins of the tremendous leviathan. He also heard the billows converse, one asking the other if, in its whelming sweep, it had left aught unsubmerged, in which case it would finish the work of destruction; to which the seaward recoiling wave made answer, that the wonderful Creator having set a limit to the ocean, it had found it impossible to encroach on it, even to the breadth of a hair. The ethical hint is clear.—The same rabbi tells of a bird he had seen, by the name of Zig, standing on the ocean’s bottom, his crest reaching to the topmost sky, finding the unfathomed

deep too shallow to bathe therein. A mysterious voice, however, warned the seafarers that the spot, so far from being shallow, was, on the contrary, so abysmally deep, that a hatchet having been dropped there seven years before was still in the process of falling, it being tossed about by the mighty surge.—In the *Midrash* it is said that The Almighty entering paradise, where the just dwell in bliss, the trees breathe heavenly odors, sing and praise The Lord, when the cock awakens and in seven different strains signalizes the entrance of Divine Majesty, calling in Biblical and post-Biblical phrases on humanity to rise and study the Divine Law.—In our poetry, prophecy, and tradition the tree is often made to symbolize vigor, prosperity, beauty, wisdom, and immortality. The Eden, wherein Adam and Eve spent their honeymoon, was lost to them through the forbidden fruit—they have eaten of the tree of knowledge.—In foretelling the future of Joseph, Jacob prophetically sees him flourish as a “fruitful bough by a spring, a fruitful bough the branches of which run over the wall.” So, in his first lyric song, does our poet of poets compare the meditating, righteous mind with “a tree planted by rivulets of water, that yieldeth the fruit in its season, whose leaf does not wither, and whose yield is exuberant.” Dreaming the dream of Messianic peace and felicity, our pious forefathers speak of a time when the trees shall daily produce delicious sweetmeats and silken garments.

Whether or not Mohammed had some intimation of Northern mythology it is impossible to decide; but it seems not out of place to refer here to the Northern myth of the stupendous ash-tree Ygdrasil, which, however, in meaning, as well as in magnitude, throws the tree of the Arab’s vision into insignificance. Ygdrasil is the tree which supports the whole universe, a tree rooting in the body of Ymir, the giant Frost, who is fed by the cow Audhumbla. Ygdrasil has three immeasurably long roots, one of which extends to the abode of the gods, called Asgard, a region to be approached only by ascending Bifrost, the rainbow, and in whose centre, more glorious than all celestial dwellings, stands Walhalla, the golden palace of Odin or Wodin, the All-Father; the other root reaches down



to the city of the giants, Jotunheim, a species of Titanic monsters personifying the elements; the third root shoots down to the dark abysses of Nifflheim, the regions of dole and darkness. Three goddesses, Urdur, Verdandi, and Skuld—past, present, and future—carefully nurse the root that terminates in Asgard; the one running to the city of the giants, Jotunheim, is fed by Ymir's well, wherein live wit and wisdom; while that descending to hell, or Nifflheim, feeds Nidhogge, the venomous adder or death, who is unceasingly gnawing at the root. Here is as deep an allegory as imagination ever created. Now, let us see if there be anything original in Mohammed's night trip to the seven heavens, themselves a fancy bodily taken from Jewish tradition.

The leading traits of Mohammed's journey to the topmost heaven, and to the very presence of Allah, are as follows: We are assured by the most devout of his historians, that on the night of that great nocturnal revelation the darkness of Erebus kept earth in dead silence, the barking, howling, hooting, and crowing of beast and fowl being supernaturally silenced; that even nature bade her elements suspend their functions, so that sea, lake, wind, and forest were all hushed in profound quiet. In the dead of that dead night a heavenly voice called on Mohammed: "Arise, thou sleeper!" was the angelic cry. On opening his eyes the prophet was startled at the sight of a luminous angel, robed in dazzling garments studded with pearls and embroidered with gold, and soaring on wings of light and beauty. It was the well-known angel Gabriel, who held the bridle of Al Borak (meaning lightning), but actually a horse of a most strange appearance, nature, and speed; a white mare, with the face of a man but the cheeks of a horse, with eyes shining as stars and wings studded with precious jewels. The æsthetic combination of a human face with the cheeks of a horse is in itself sufficient to discourage every attempt to seek poetry in the grotesque vision. If Al Borak is a copy of Ezekiel's seraphim it is a poor one indeed. The prophet was ready to mount the steed, but the steed was not ready to receive him, protesting that the only great figure she thought worthy of bestriding her was the patriarch Abraham,

whom she once bore on his way to see his son Ishmael; Al Borak is thus a very old mare of the heavenly stables, older, though less interesting than Balaam's ass. Gabriel assures the steed that no worthier person ever bestrode her than was Mohammed, none so beloved and honored of Allah. At this assurance inspiration comes over Al Borak, who exclaims: "Is not this the author of the profession of the true faith?" Here the angel, in a becoming encomium, extols Mohammed at the expense of all other prophets. Mohammed Ibn Abdallah, of the tribes of Arabia Felix, and of the true faith, was the greatest of Adam's progeny, the seal of the prophets; without his intercession nobody can enter paradise; heaven and hell obey him; woe to them who would not recognize the true prophet. This is a daring *coup d'état* against the pretensions of the resurrected Jesus, who, we are reliably informed, on reappearing to some of his disciples said: "All the might of heaven and earth are vested in me." Some of those disciples doubted the appearance as well as the claims of their master; not so Al Borak, who, taking advantage of so good an opportunity, beseeches the angel to cause Mohammed to secure her admission to the paradisaical pasture grounds, which promise the prophet favorably grants, and the ride begins. Horse and rider, accompanied by Gabriel, dart their flight heavenward, sweep over desert, mount, and forest until, passing Mount Sinai, the angel causes him to descend and pray. The next descent is made at Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, a questionable reverence if one considers the chasm that forever separates the rival apostles, the distance between the Church and the Mosque. Three times Mohammed is urged to stay his course, but Al Borak could not be checked, and this not without good reason; for, according to Gabriel's information, the first appeal came from a Jew, whom to obey would have been to deliver Islam to Judaism; the other voice was of a Christian, who, in urging him to stay, had a like unholy end in view; the third voice was of a beautiful damsel, signifying worldliness, whom to obey would have been to undermine the spiritual standing of the new faith.

Having escaped all these temptations Mohammed stops at

the Temple of Zion, fastens Al Borak, and enters to pray. His joy may be easily imagined on finding here Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, who give him a cordial welcome, and, having prayed a while, he beholds a ladder of light descend from heaven and rest its foot on the *Shakra*, the stone on which Jacob had his vision in the wilderness. To meet Abraham, Moses, and Jesus in a dream, praying in the Temple of Zion, is certainly conceivable; not so that meeting of Jesus with Moses and Elijah at noontide, with no purpose whatsoever. Even a miracle ought to imply some object, else it is unworthy of any notice. The ladder was the manifest invitation for the prophet and the angelic escort to ascend, which they did as quick as lightning, landing at the gate of the first heaven. As a good sentinel, the keeper of that portal had first to be satisfied in every particular before admission was granted; this having been successful, prophet and angel are soon in the cerulean regions. Of course there is much to be seen. The first heaven is all pure silver, from which, by golden chains, the stars are suspended, each guarded by an angel against the intrusion of demons, who are ever lurking, ready to seize the first opportunity to do some mischief. Here Mohammed meets father Adam, whom he is commanded to reverence, in return for which Adam embraces him, saluting him as the greatest of prophets. Lucifer was neither as wise nor as fortunate as the apostle, for, on declining to do homage to Adam, the rebel spirit was forever ejected from heaven. But this first firmament has a somewhat zoological aspect, its denizens being animal-angels pleading before Allah for their less blissful prototypes in the nether world. The prophet's attention is soon caught by the appearance of an enormous cock of dazzling whiteness, whose height and crest touch the second heaven, though it is a five hundred years' journey distant from the first. The crowing of this bird is a sweet melody which, on every morrow, delights the ear of Allah, awaking at the same time all creatures on earth, when, in unison, all fowls of the like kind join him in singing Allah's praise.

The second heaven is soon reached, and, after an exchange of compliments with the gate-keeper, the prophet finds himself

on a vault of brilliant steel, and is heartily saluted by Noah as the greatest of prophets. The third heaven is too glorious for the human eye to endure; all is of pearls, sapphires, and emeralds; but the object of wonder therein is an angel, entirely too long to be measured, with two fearful eyes separated by a distance of a seventy thousand days' journey. He was, moreover, a general, whom a thousand armed battalions of inferior angels obeyed, and an important recorder, before whom lay a ledger of astounding dimensions, in which he continually entered new names and erased others. This was Azraël, the angel of death, who enjoyed the fullest intimacy with Allah, and whose business it was to enter the names of such as were to be born and blot out such as have reached the end of the span granted them.

Ascending the fourth heaven he finds it to be of the purest silver. Among its angelic hosts there is one cherub whose height is a five hundred days' journey, and whose countenance is sadly troubled, rivers of tears rushing from his eyes; he it is whose mission consists in weeping streams over human frailty, in incessantly uttering evil predictions for the wicked; a poor mission indeed for such a stately cherub. The fifth heaven is a decided improvement on the other four, it being of the purest gold, radiant with oceans of fire. Aaron was at hand to salute the visitant as the last and greatest prophet. But the golden environments are here greatly marred by the terrific presence and aspect of the presiding angel who rules the element of fire, and is the messenger of vengeance. Why the peace-loving Aaron should have such a horrible neighbor is hard to conceive, unless it be a punishment for the golden calf he unwillingly shaped for backsliding Israel. But O, such company! A Medusa in features, that celestial monster has rolling eyes flashing lightning, a visage of copper, all covered with warts and boils and other bad things, and he wields a flaming lance too hot and too long for us to measure; but it was not the longest thing the prophet had seen. His throne is a mountain of fire, surrounded by heaps of red-hot chains. We are urged to be grateful that that terrific prince of fire and vengeance is not allowed to pay us a visit here under the

cool moon, since his flames would consume the mountains, dry up the oceans, spoil many a farmer's crop, and thus render life miserable. He is the chief of that legion of angels who wreak Divine vengeance on such as do not believe in the message of Mohammed. A fitter type of Islam's faith and history, written with blood and steel, it is impossible to imagine.

We see in this prodigy a caricature of the beautiful myth of Phæton, offspring of Phœbus, or the Sun, and we beg permission to state it briefly. Phæton is a child of the Sun by Clymene. Phæton's boast of heavenly descent is derided by Epaphus, a scion of Jupiter by Io. Phæton complains to his mother of the insult offered him and implores her to test his divine descent. Clymene piteously appeals to Phœbus to bear witness that she speaks truth, then advises Phæton to proceed to India, the rising of the Sun, ascend the palace of his father, and get the proof of his origin. Following his mother's suggestion, Phæton reaches the dazzling abode of his sire, the Sun; he is overpowered by his dazzling splendor; he sees his father on the throne of glowing light, the Hours, Days, Months, Seasons, and Years around him. Moved to pity by the timidity of the beautiful youth at a distance, Phœbus inquires who he is and what he wants, and, learning the object of his son's daring ascent, Phœbus confirms Clymene's assertion, and as a proof offers the youth the fulfillment of any wish he may utter. "O, then, let me lead thy sun-chariot for a day!" exclaimed the rash stripling. The sun-god is amazed at the bold request, discovering too late that he promised too much. In vain does he warn the youth that only immortal hands could successfully manage the steeds of fire that draw the burning chariot athwart the vast empyrean; even Jupiter, himself, could not do it without danger to the universe. Youth is unreasonably obstinate, and the divine sire, having sealed his promise with the irrevocable oath of the gods, yields with sorrow. For he knows that Phæton would have first to climb the steep heavens, soar over tremendous gulfs of space; he would have to pass among terrible monsters, such as the Horns of the Bull, then the Crab, the Scorpion, the Lion, and the Archer; then descend toward the sea, which is not the



least of perils. All this deters not the ambitious youth, who persists in his wish, and, Dawn drawing near and Aurora blushing at a distance, he is allowed to mount the celestial chariot made up of wheels of glowing gold, of masses of silver, fire, jewels, and crystallites. Off he sweeps with his fiery team, finding, alas, every warning of his father too soon confirmed. The unfathomed deeps below make him dizzy, his eyes grow dim ; the horses are uncontrollable ; he loses all thought, caution, presence of mind ; the monsters appal him ; his course is irregular ; the steeds run as they please. Meanwhile the world below, clouds, mountains, fields, cities, harvests, and forests catch fire ; the wells, lakes, and rivers are dried ; from one end to the other earth is a conflagration, and the heat reaches Phæton, who finds it unbearable. Earth bursts open and light breaks into the dark regions of Tartarus, frightening Pluto ; the gulfy ocean boils, and Neptune, though sorely oppressed, is unable to raise his head above the wave. At last Earth prays to Jupiter to be rather destroyed by his thunderbolt than left to perish thus in slow agony. The god of gods calls to witness all the deities that he is just in saving the world by destroying the mad youth who durst do what no mortal ought to dare. Jupiter shakes his divine locks, thunders and roars, then, brandishing one of his fatal lightning bolts, he hurls it at the unfortunate Phæton and sweeps him out of existence. Mohammed's angel of vengeance as well as his zoological sky savors too much of this poetical allegory not to invite comparison, but, as in his drawings on Jewish lore, he disfigures it.

The sixth heaven Mohammed found to be built of translucent carbuncle, with a presiding angel made half of snow and half of fire, the two antagonistic elements working there in perfect harmony, a circumstance which causes a host of lesser angels to beseech Allah to unite all the faithful of Islam as He united snow and fire. It is impossible to suppress a smile on reading these grotesque fancies, for which the prophet's Jewish secretary furnished the materials from Pharisaic sources. His angels and demons are, on the whole, poor creatures, compared with those of a nobler Jewish imagina-

tion, on which he is shamefully drawing without giving the least credit. An ancient Jewish fancy is that the firmament is made of water and the stars of fire, which, however do not disturb the peace of heaven.<sup>1</sup> There is a five hundred years' distance between earth and heaven<sup>2</sup> is said elsewhere. It is also stated that there is an angel who stands on earth and whose head reaches to the throne of God, where he weaves crowns for his Creator,<sup>3</sup> from which it follows that this angel must be of a height of at least five hundred years' travel. The Pharisee lived under the conviction that from the day of his birth to that of his death angels were watching over him, keeping record of all his doings, and following him beyond the grave to testify as to his life; for, said he, "if a man does a good thing he gives birth to a pleading angel; if he commits a sin, an accusing, evil angel is born." Our Prophecy frequently refers to heavenly hosts, and in the Pentateuch angels often execute the decrees of the Most High. But it was in Babylon where the exiled Jews, by coming in contact with the followers of Zoroaster, imbibed numerous Magian fancies.<sup>4</sup> Henceforth, the whole universe is peopled with good and evil beings, not literally but metaphysically. *Geninnom* is presided over by an angel.<sup>5</sup> As often as The Almighty utters a sound an angel springs into being from the mystic river *Dinor*.<sup>6</sup> These angels are half fire and half water.<sup>7</sup> Gabriel was ever the heavenly guardian of Abraham. Angels preside over ocean and wind, over night and day, over every element above and below, implying, however, nothing else than agencies called into existence by the Divine Breath, and disappearing the moment their task is done. This is the world-wide difference between the angelology and demonology of Judaism and those of heathenism and the two great religions we are alluding to. Here is what our Ibn Gabirol, poet and philosopher, whom we shall meet again, says of

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<sup>1</sup> ירקיע של מים וכבבים של אש עושה שלום. <sup>2</sup> מארץ עד לרקיע תק' שנה.  
<sup>3</sup> מלאך אחד שהוא עומד בארץ וראשו מגיע אצל החיות וקושר כתרם לקונו.  
<sup>4</sup> שמות המלאכים עלו מבבל. <sup>5</sup> שר של גיהנם. <sup>6</sup> נבראין מ"ה מנהר דינור  
מכל דיבור שיצא מפי קב"ה נברא מלאך. <sup>7</sup> המלאך עצמו חציו אש וחציו מים.



God's angels. In the course of his great poem known as the "Royal Crown," he exclaims:—

"Lord, who may fathom Thy unfathomed Will,  
 Creating of Thyself effulgent hosts,  
 Celestial beings, spirits high, in Thy  
 Blest Presence biding, messengers of Thine;  
 They, vested with resistless might, assigned  
 Dominion hold, the sword that flaming wheels  
 In hand; quick execution doing as  
 Thy bidding prompts. All shaped of radiance, full  
 Of glitter as the precious stone, within,  
 Without, inspired with Thy Breath, they do  
 Thy ways contemplate; they of holy source,  
 From light's primordial fountain springing, ranked  
 Are in divisions, banners bearing, which  
 Their rank and state in fiery letters blazon;  
 Of them, some do command and some obey;  
 Seeing, unseen, some hosts on wing depart,  
 Return, untired, unspent; some are all fire,  
 Some water and flame, some fire and water, some  
 Tempestuous winds; seraphim are others; as  
 Northlight, as lightning, as meteors, are many;  
 All bowing in awe before The Most High,  
 Hymning His glory by day and by night."

It was in the sixth heaven where Mohammed had another meeting with Moses who, instead of welcoming him as before with delight, wept bitter tears. And good cause had he to weep, for, said he, with a frank display of unheavenly jealousy, "You are my successor, who is destined to lead more of thy nation to paradise than I could in my efforts to redeem the ever-backsliding sons of Israel." When one knows a little more of the bitterly jealous nature of Allah's choicest apostle, it is easily understood how, judging others by self, he imputed similar sentiments to Moses. But let us follow him to the seventh heaven, where the patriarch Abraham received him. It must be gratifying to the Jew to know that Moses is in the sixth, and Abraham in the seventh heaven, but Jesus is nowhere found above. The "last prophet" is not quite consistent in his narration; for if Jesus was good enough to pray with Abraham and Moses in the Sanctuary of Zion he is likewise entitled to some prominence in the heavenly regions. Nothing but Moslem jealousy denies him this.

As it was to be expected, matters in that topmost heaven look unutterably Divine—all glory, light, and beatitude. The denizens of this most blissful of all skies are most assuredly an amazing type of cherubim. One specimen may serve as an illustration. Imagine a seraph whose body is as large as this earth, who bears seventy thousand heads, each head having seventy thousand mouths, each mouth harboring seventy thousand tongues, each tongue speaking seventy thousand different languages; then fancy, if you can, a host of such angelic polyglots incessantly singing the praise of Allah, and if you never heard Islam's votaries perform music in the Moorish empire, you are likely to reach no unfavorable conclusion as to the nature of this heavenly symphony. The next wonder is the lotus-tree, *Sedrat*, which grows on the right side of Allah's invisible throne. This tree is longer than the distance between earth and sun, and angels more numerous than the dust of earth are disporting in its shade; its leaves resemble elephantine ears; in its branches flocks of immortal birds are singing the verses of Al Koran. Milk and honey are less sweet than its fruit—one of which is sufficient to feed all hungry creatures below. The most interesting part of the fruit, however, is its seed, which is not wisdom—a thing of which the prophet was painfully in need—but it contains a lovely, beautiful virgin with sweet, large, black eyes—a *houri* reserved for the faithful as a reward for loyalty to the prophet. Four rivers issue from the lotus-tree—two enter paradise, the other two are the Nile and the Euphrates. One need not wonder, therefore, that the source of the Nile is yet half a mystery. As to the four rivers issuing from Eden, they are surely more picturesquely and logically described in our Genesis.

Near by Allah's throne is the prayer-house, Al Mamor, built of precious stones and lit up by countless ever-burning lamps. On entering its portals, three vases are offered to Mohammed to drink from—the one containing honey, the other wine, the third milk. He drinks of the milk, to the great delight of Gabriel, who assures him that but for his predilection for that white beverage in preference to the wine, his people would have all degenerated and gone astray. The prayer-house

resembles the Caaba of Mecca, which is actually in a straight line below it on earth. It is daily visited by seventy thousand angels of the highest order, who at that moment were engaged in making their circuit adoration, Mohammed joining them and walking seven times around. Down to the number *seven* everything save the grotesque and the ludicrous, including the paradise of Islam, is borrowed from Pharisaic and Biblical lore. "Seven times in the day do I praise Thee because of Thy righteous decrees," says the Psalmist. The seventh day of the week is our Sabbath; the seventh year was the year of the *Shemitha*, the seventh *Shemitha* initiated the Jubilee; our two historical festivals, Passover and the Feast of Booths, are to be observed for seven days; Pentecost occurs seven weeks after Passover; the Israelites marched seven times around the city of Jericho; on the seventh day seven priests, bearing before the Ark seven cornets of ram's horn, marched seven times around that city's wall; after seven days each new-born Jewish male child enters the covenant of Abraham; nuptial rejoicing is limited to seven days; in old Jewish congregations it is still customary to make a circuit of seven round the bride before the wedding ceremony is performed; on the old belief that, as the *Zohar* tells, "seven days the soul wanders from the grave to the house, and from the house to the grave, after which the body rests where it is, and the soul goes where it must," is founded our mourning period of seven days, known as the *Shib'ah*. The heavenly Jerusalem<sup>8</sup> of Jesus, as well as the Paradise of Islam, are both taken from Jewish tradition. Speaking of the *Gan Eden*, the Pharisees believe that "the souls of the righteous are gathered under the Throne of Glory;" and this, with an additional promise of sensual pleasures, is literally repeated by Islam. People need do no more than read and compare, to see that whatever is not Jewish is neither good nor true in the Koran and the Gospels.

Beyond this seventh heaven Gabriel was not good enough to follow Mohammed, who, faster than thought, made his way upward, first through an abyss of thick darkness—the ירפל of

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<sup>8</sup> ירושלים של עזרה כל הרצועה לעלות עולה ושל עזרה אין עולין אלא המזמנים לה.

Hebrew poetry—then emerging, found himself amazed in the very Presence of Allah and close to His throne. But for the two thousand impenetrable veils which covered the light of the Deity, the prophet would have been consumed by the ineffable radiance. Without further ceremony, Allah stretched forth one of His hands, laying it on Mohammed's breast, the other he rested on his shoulder, when a freezing sensation thrilled the apostle to the bottom of his soul, giving place soon, however, to a feeling of unutterable bliss, enhanced by a celestial fragrance, which was spreading and permeating all the heavens. In this posture he received his great mission, the leading doctrines of the Koran, and fifty orisons to be daily recited by the faithful. The fifty orisons were, however, by the good advice of Moses—and this alone ought to eternalize Moses in the heart of Islam—who repeatedly caused Mohammed to reascend and pray for a reduction, finally reduced to five, which the Moslem still recites daily. In this manner did the "seal of the prophets" face Allah and bring down the "true profession of faith" on earth: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet."

This profession of the Moslem is a weak echo of "and the people feared The Lord, and they believed in The Lord and in Moses, his servant." This "hero as a prophet" is Carlyle's admiration, who, speaking of the Arabs, goes out of his way to remark that "they are, as we know, of Jewish kindred, but with that deadly, terrible earnestness of the Jews, they seem to combine something graceful, brilliant, which is not Jewish." Why, who would believe, that there was nothing "graceful" and "brilliant" about the Jew, Jesus? We should like to be informed of the source from which orthodox Christianity derives its sensational glitter and brillianey. Let it pass. Carlyle is welcome to Mohammed's heroism and prophecy; it is a question of taste. The Jew's sense of the æsthetic is inseparable from his ethics. Judaism fails to see beauty or grace in things which are at variance with truth and sound common sense. Mohammed was born in the land of false prophets, and proved more successful than the countless *mahdis* who, with equal claims, failed miserably. With the few grains of

truth therein borrowed from the treasury of Israel, Islam served, in the inscrutable designs of Providence, a certain purpose, but it has long ago reached its period of decline and decay. Islam's infant lips were stained with blood; its career has been one of carnage and bloodshed; its life and history a scandal to ethical humanity.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE HEBREW'S GREATEST VISION.

STRANGE and mysterious are the beginnings and the ends of life ; mysterious the surroundings, mysterious the being, hunting, and driving of man. Who are we ? Why are we ? How was this world made ? Who made it ? Why did He make it ? Why is this world given to us ? What kind of a world is it ? Who will answer ? Every stone is a mystery, every blade of grass, every flower, every creature a symbol. Why have we reason, feeling, longing, hopes, and dreams ? What is it that softens, deepens, and stirs all our being at the sight of the star-studded empyrean, the ocean's rolling tide, the East's springing glories, the West's fading splendors ? All have meaning, speech, and lesson. Why is life so dear, power so sweet, fame so precious, death so unwelcome, nay, terrible to the great majority of mankind ? It is because there is a spirit in man that dreads annihilation, and is thrilled with the joyous prospect of life eternal. The consciousness that, mortal though we be in frame, the longing soul, the deep, meditative, searching mind, is endowed with powers to earn immortality, is the gravitating influence that causes the world to move, the human spirit to verge toward a higher plane of endeavor. But this type of mind is as rare as the elixir, as wonderful and as mighty. Tribes and races have been saved from oblivion and raised to the summit of immortal fame by a few, aye, often by one of those thaumaturgic minds, some of which have stamped cycles with their unaccountable idiosyncrasies. Five or six minds of that mysterious type have, it is clear, divided this earth among themselves, and bade her roll on with the marks of their genius engraved on her sovereign creature. The Synagogue, the Church, the Pagoda, and the Mosque represent so many minds and nothing more.



The division of spiritual rule over the race is, however, neither final nor uncontested; the strife between the great spirits being unabated and carried on, as it were, from the realms of pure spirit. Who shall rule supreme, who shall triumph over his adversaries, Buddha, Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus, or Mohammed? Which shall be the permanent book of revelation, the Zend-Avesta, the Buddhistic Scriptures, the Koran, the Gospel, or The Old Testament, to say nothing of Confucius and many more, who are entitled to a hearing? It behooves us, Israelites, to assert once more the rule and supremacy of The Infinite One and His living Word over all other gods and their unsubstantiated, unrealized revelations. Not worldly, but spiritual, sovereignty is the claim of Israel. You ask: What is Judaism? We answer: Mind in action, truth invulnerable, unyielding, imperishable, conquering, herself unconquered; subduing, herself unsubdued. Have you a mind of your own? Can you say with Descartes, "I think," then are you justified in saying "I am;" then are you really alive, alive as a Hebrew of mind, alive for now and for aye; for the great mind rests not until its marks are imprinted on the sands of Time.

Good ground have we to claim a mind of our own, a national, say—spiritual personality, as distinctive as the sun is above the lesser orbs of heaven, and, we may well add, as powerful, dazzling, and fructifying. We pay no tribute to conceit, nor homage to vanity or vainglory, by asserting our irrefutable achievement of having impregnated the world's mind with that peculiar, resistless individualism, the triumphant genius of the ancient Hebrew and the modern Israelite. The mind that cleaves to The Universal Mind, who may change, who subdue it? As God lives, do they live, inspired by His Breath; they are deathless. Israel had a dream; he saw the ladder that links earth to heaven; he saw God's angels ascending and descending; he heard the voice of sweetest promise assure him that, through his seed, the world will be enlightened and redeemed, and he rose from his vision trembling with sacred awe at the grand vista that opened before his mind's eye. As long as there shall be men on earth Israel



shall live. Sweetest of visions, glory of glories! Cycles of history belied not that vision.

Akin to the all-absorbing influence of self-preservation works the deep-rooted impulse, the unappeased longing in the human soul to perpetuate her mortal career by all possible means accessible to her; by a pyramid in Egypt, by marble and bronze statues in Greece and Rome; elsewhere, by deeds of valor, feats of heroism, intended to secure an honored name that lingers long in man's memory after its bearer is consigned to eternal rest. That our soul is deathless we trust and hope; that we may prolong our existence here below we are *sure* of. Some men live for nothing; some vegetate unheeded, unhonored; some live for a day; some rise into prominence for a year; others for a decade; fewer for a century; but fewest, aye, very few, live forever. These are such as immortalize their name and the stock they spring from by works of genius; such as combine to make what is understood to be a nation's literature. Armies perish; navies come to naught; empires wither and decay; beauty fades; everything fluctuates under the sun, save the literary triumphs of the giant mind; these live with the stars. England has lost these United States; she will lose Canada, Australia, and India, and may one day lose her islands and be nothing but a name; but she is rendered imperishable by her Miltons, her Newtons, and her Shakespeares. Babylon is dead; Greece lives in her literature. Alexander will be forgotten; Aristotle never. Voltaire fears less Frederick's genius than Frederick the withering shafts of the genius of Voltaire. Not their armies and martial triumphs, but their Homers and Dantes are the glories of nations; for it is in the literature of a people wherein their heroism, their spirit, their genius, manhood, and idealism are set forth; the noblest and grandest of earthly monuments; the invisible chain that links the past to the present and the future; the symbols by which bygone ages commune with those yet unborn, yet to come. Here is the miracle of the dead speaking to the living. Surely the mind that utters truth is, like truth herself, eternal.—As to our own literature, it is unequaled in depth, variety, mystery, and sublimity, and

no figures may compute the good it has done for the frail race of men. Aye, if nothing else glorious should be left of the eternal wandering Jew, the Bible alone would secure his immortality. "Do not be ashamed of your Bible. There is not a virtue but it commends; there is not a sorrow but it comforts; there is not a good law on the statute-book of any country but is founded on The Ten Commandments. There are no braver, grander people in all the earth than the heroes and heroines which it biographizes," says Talmage. That Book which the world honors most, that mirror of truth, Divine love, human greatness, genius, and frailty, who can say that it sprung not from the Hebrew's deepest being? But Israel had more to say than was said in the Hebraic idiom. There was, there is, no civilized tongue in which the Jew did not utter his soul's dreams and realities. Chaldaic, Latin, Greek, Arabic, French, Spanish, Italian, English, and German having successively been his vehicles of thought. There is hardly a topic concerning the here and the hereafter of which the Jew did not think, did not dream.

The Hebrew's greatest vision is that of the beginning, his sweetest dream that of the end of things. We intend to test Judaism by its aspects of creation and immortality. Did Israel, in his earliest phases of development, cherish the immortal dream? Says a Christian authority, in a great work of reference: "The New Testament itself discloses two entirely different eschatological methods. The one is moral, spiritual, idealist, employing outward forms only as symbols, viewing the future rather in regard to development of character than as a mode of existence. This is the Christian as contrasted with the Jewish method. The other follows the natural tendency of Hebrew thought. It is literal, material, sensuous. It delights in chronological arrangements of the unknown future, and topographical arrangements of the unseen world." We have either to condemn this as the stupid statement of an unscholarly priest, or brand it as a willful perversion of truth. The reverse of that assertion, as will soon appear, is true; and it is a sorry tribute to error to place such an unsustainable view, a flat misstatement of things, in a leading encyclopædia.

But this is the cuckoo-song of the alone-saving Church. Everybody who knows the ancient creeds knows that the popular notion of a hell and a heaven is as old as man's religious inclination. In his first contact with the savage Indian, Columbus heard an aged barbarian warn him of the dark place in the beyond reserved for the wicked, and assuring him that a bright abode was there for the just. Cultured polytheism sang of Hades and Elysium. Jesus spoke of a terrific hell ready for such as would not accept him, and promised paradise to all his followers. So did Mohammed. Old Scandinavia had its Niffleheim and its Wallhalla. Modern heathendom entertains strong hopes and fears of retribution beyond the grave, such ideas being inseparable from the earliest, not less than the latest religious promptings. Well may we question the competence and sincerity of an author who, ignoring the absolutely transcendental God-ideal of the most dreaming, abstract of races, imputes to it the grossest eschatological fancies. It remains for us to let a statement of facts take the place of a refutation.

We unhesitatingly advance the asseveration, that throughout our vast Biblical literature there is not a pen-picture, not an idea of a "topographical arrangement" in regard to punitive or remunerative retribution. There are in Pharisaic literature vague allusions and a variety of conceptions and fancies in relation to this subject, but, as in later Jewish philosophy, the idea of a literal hell is positively rejected.<sup>9</sup> Yet, is not this rather an indication of spiritual sanity than of an absence of that intuitive consciousness of the soul's immortality, without which all religion had no higher end? How can one believe in Divine Justice without implying reward of virtue and punishment of wickedness? "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," in return for what? for "vexation of the spirit" here and its annihilation hereafter? Such a conclusion would not alone suppress every incentive to faith and virtue, but would engender strong motives for vice and despair. Those throngs

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<sup>9</sup> אין ניהנם לעתיד. אלא מוציא חמה כנרתיקה וכו'.

of "Israel's scattered sheep" who died the martyr's death, the confession of God's Unity on their lip, could they, could any human being do so unless full of faith that there be something more precious and less perishable than earthly life? Shall we assume that the only reward of Noah's righteousness was his preservation from a watery grave? Could Abraham and Moses have done what they did, died as they died, without a positive conviction of the Just God being just here and everywhere? on this side of the grave and beyond it? Could a people have Elijahs, Daniels, and Eleazars; could it fear death much less than God, without a profound faith in life eternal. Could men of the highest faculty, men like Moses, Samuel, and Isaiah, never ask themselves—whither? One word of that greatest of law-givers fully accounts for the ancient Hebrew's silence on this topic. "The mysteries belong to God, our Lord, and the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever." When was more said in so few syllables? It means, thus far and no farther. Nobody doubted what nobody could explain, until a morbid imagination engendered the most monstrous of fancies, and then had we a Christian and a Mohammedan hell of "topographical arrangement." Hell is an institution of the New, not of the Old Testament.

That a fertile, assimilative imagination, as the Jewish is known to be, would, sooner or later, have its legendary folklore, embracing tales and fancies of infernal regions, is just what was to be expected, and will be referred to in a later chapter. Jewish speculation, however, never gave room to such a thought, because no sane mind can give definition or precise expression to a fancy. Poetry may indulge in building air-castles; moral and spiritual theology must be rooted in a healthier soil. It is conceivable that a religion which cannot imagine gods without tangible forms, cannot imagine a retribution of a purely spiritual nature. It must be either a hell, black, deep, hot, inhabited by fiends and furies; or a Paradise of carnal joys and sensual luxuries, a golden city, golden thrones and crowns, sweet music, fragrance, wings to fly, delicious fruit to eat, nectarian rivers to drink, maidens to love, an unsated hunger, and plenty of celestial pleasures to enjoy,

ambrosia, the flesh of the boar Schrimir, and the meat of the she-goat Heidrum. Trinitarian Christianity, with its picture-worship and sensuous displays, its Satan as a mighty adversary of God, with hosts of demons to do his biddings, a tremendous power not unprepared to storm the heavenly abodes and to frustrate many a good design of The Almighty, had, to be in some measure consistent, to evolve infernal realms full of horrors and celestial courts full of delights. Ludicrous inconsistency alone could prompt the Jew to associate with his infinite, spiritual, unfathomable Deity a hell of bodily torments and a Paradise of golden or jeweled delights. A faith that sees in the visible and invisible universe what Fichte terms a "Divine Idea," a manifestation of a Providential design, that admits of speculation not of explanation; a faith whose earliest conceptions contain the germs of all future philosophy, whose God has the universe in Him, but is not all contained therein; such a faith is too sublime to degrade the ideal by interlarding it with the fantastic and the sensual. Here is a world, every atom of which is an unsolved mystery, baffling all science and philosophy. Ages uncounted have been wasted to explain the "So it is," few having dared to answer the Whence, Whither, and Wherefore of this planet and of life thereon; what madness, then, to fool one's self and the world with fanciful pictures of the unknown, unknowable beyond that is one of those mysteries which "belong to The Lord our God"? Thank the Jew for his unconquerable, sound, common sense, his religious sanity. He, too, has his sweet dreams, his Divine visions, but they are the dreams of a wide-awake man, are day-dreams. There is no raving, no mania about them. The Jew dreams with sunshine around him, with his eyes wide open.

Begin with the Old Testament, the cosmogony, whose conception of the Creator and His creations is loftier than that of the ancient Hebrew? Ernst Haeckel, whom Darwin admires as the leading scientist in evolutionary researches, assures us that the Mosaic Genesis is the most natural and comes nearest the results of modern scientific inquiry. What a transcendental spiritual genius must have inspired the Hebraic author, who in a few incomparable lines bodies forth the overpowering



creative drama, conjuring, as it strikes the mind, Cosmos out of Chaos ! Childish, silly, are all other tales of creation in face of that whelming sublimity of Hebrew cosmogony as set forth in Genesis. There is the Japanese legend of a creative god springing from a vegetable called Asi, which in turn owed its rise to original mud floating like oil on water. There is the golden egg myth, which the earliest teachers of Phœnicia, Polynesia, China, India, and Egypt made the origin of all things, thus trying to account for the spherical shape of the heavens, but invariably winding up with a plurality of gods and demons. There is the tortoise theory and the mouse myth, making up a gamut of infantile fables and fancies, which show the early man in his utmost stupid helplessness. Even such illustrious races as later rose to high distinction, what a pitiable conception theirs of the origin of things ! We do not refer to Ovid's story of creation, which too strikingly betrays its Jewish parentage to be discussed as a heathen production. In Ovid's time Jews were settled in Rome, and his narration, and especially his telling of chaos, the entire absence of light, and the subsequent separation of earth from sea, heaven from earth, and the peopling of air, land, and sea with birds, beasts, and fishes, is as clearly Jewish as the most beautiful sayings of Jesus and Mohammed have repeatedly been proved to be. We shall do no more than glance at the Greek and the Scandinavian cosmogonies, two mighty scions of the Aryan stock.

Jupiter is not the creative god. Although the chief of all gods, he is an offspring of Saturn or Chronos, Time. But who is Chronos ? Whence did he come ? Ouranos was his father, Ouranos the infinite. Ouranos gave birth to Chronos, Chronos begat Zeus, or Jupiter, who, being the first-born of Time, who was the only born of Ouranos, secured, as his birthright, the supreme sovereignty over mortal and immortal beings, gods, demi-gods, and men. The first creatures we hear of are Titans, Saturn, Rhea, Prometheus, Oceanus, Epimetheus, Hyperion, Iapetus, Ophion, Themis, Mnemosyne, and Eurynome, all offsprings of earth and heaven, who issued from Chaos ; horrible giant creatures, of whom the chief god was in wholesome terror. Chronos, however, had the unfatherly habit of

devouring his own children, until he was cured of it by his beloved Metis, who, by a mysterious potion, wisely administered, caused him to disgorge all the dear ones he had swallowed. This leads to a domestic disturbance of the heavenly dynasty. War breaks out and is bitterly waged between Jupiter and his brothers and sisters on the one side, and the aged father, Saturn, on the other, the latter being vigorously assisted by the dreadful hundred-handed Titans. Victory crowns the unfilial audacity of Jupiter. Saturn is subdued, and his auxiliary giants are locked up in Tartarus, or hell. You will remember that much later a similar fate befel Lucifer, who, assisted by his diabolic cohorts, tried to wage war against God and his son, who hurled him into the blackest abyss of hell. Having defeated Saturn, there is a peaceful division of the universe among the Olympian family. Jupiter assumes sovereign power over the heavens, Neptune presides over the Ocean, and Pluto rules over the realms of the dead. Jupiter's symbols of celestial royalty are the thunderbolt, the *Ægis*, and the divine Eagle. A host of inferior gods, bearing the name of the several virtues, passions, elements, and mental endowments, obey his commands. So does Pallas Athene rule over wisdom, having sprung, armed, from the head of Jupiter; Mercury is identified with swiftness, commerce, industry; Eros is the god of love, Aphrodite the goddess of beauty, Ares the war-god, Hephaistos the god of art, Iris the goddess of the rainbow, Demeter the goddess of agriculture, and so on. Sleep, dream, illusion, madness, vengeance, retribution, as every intellectual gift, and all branches of literature were all personified by a god or goddess. Subordinate demi-gods had charge of all forests, streams, and springs. Scarcely anything worthy of notice was without some presiding invisible power, sometimes assuming the form of man and living in his company.

All these gods and demi-gods had been there before man was thought of, wherefore, at a certain moment, Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus, received orders to make man and animals, and endow them with the indispensable faculties. Epimetheus was engaged in executing this work, while Prometheus took it easy, confining himself to superintendence. By



some miscalculation, while endowing all animals, Epimetheus neglected to spare a few of the necessary endowments for man, having lavished them all on the lower animal creation. To repair the evil, Prometheus, assisted by Pallas Athene, the goddess of wisdom, stealthily ascended to heaven, stole fire from the sun's unebbing glow and gave it to man. Fire turned out a fearful weapon in the human hand, stronger than all the gifts bestowed on the whole animal kingdom. Armed with fire man became the terror of the strongest beast, and the gods themselves had cause to respect his weapon, for, beside warming himself, he bent metals to his will, and could do much good and evil in this world. Jupiter was angry that such a gift of the gods should be bestowed on the mortal race, and, while one tale records that Prometheus was punished by being chained to the Caucasus, with a vulture feeding on his liver, another version maintains that woman was an afterthought of the cunning chief-god, who created her, endowed her with irresistible charms, to punish the Titans for the theft. Thus was woman sent on earth to counteract, as it were, the blessing of light. Who would believe it? We shall see the Church adopt this view, and for centuries act upon it.

In this way was man made. The first age was one of light, truth, innocence, and happiness; it was the *golden age*. Perpetual spring ruled; the earth yielded more than mankind could use; the rivers flowed with milk and wine; honey flowed from the trees. But, as all good things, the golden age did not last long. Man soon lost his innocence; his greed brought about violence, fraud, and all well-known vices. Earth, till then the commonwealth of man, was now divided and subdivided; her entrails were broken open to tear out her veins of gold, silver, and iron. There was no peace; blood was often shed; all the good gods fled from earth, except Astræa, Justice, who soon fled withal. Jupiter lost his patience, convened a council of the gods, meditated first the destruction of this world by fire, but, lest the flames endanger the safety of the skies, he concluded to drown the wicked age. Here the Biblical picture of Noah's flood is faithfully reproduced, Ararat being substituted by Parnassus, and Noah's fam-

ily by Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, whose noble life caused Jupiter to relent. The waters subside. Inspired by an oracle, the good Deucalion discovers that the race is to be regenerated by their "casting behind them the bones of their mother." Unwilling to desecrate the bones of their parent, they stood hesitating as to the course that would suggest itself as the wisest, when another inspiration opened his eyes, that by the "mother's bones" the stones of earth were meant, earth being the mother of all. Doing as they were bidden, each stone they threw behind them miraculously turned into a human form, full of life and vigor. And so was the world made, devastated, and reformed again. An ingenious story, but what sense, what order, what plan therein? We should, besides, notice the immoral tendency of this cosmogonic myth. In the very beginning of things the first-born son-god fights with the whole family against the god-father, on whose ruin he raises his throne. Theft is the next act of a divine power intrusted with the task of shaping and endowing the animal kingdom. One may easily see something deep in all this, but the unethical nature of the tale did nevertheless prove detrimental to Greek and Roman morals. Homer tells of shameful vices indulged in by the Olympian chief, whose bad example could not but be followed by gods and men. The history of Sparta and Athens is there to show the fatal consequences of a corrupted theogony, for it were folly to expect man to do and be better than his gods.

As to the cosmogony of which the Eddas tell it is less interesting and more childish. In that work we are assured of a time when there was neither heaven nor earth, nor anything but a dark, bottomless abyss and a hovering mass of mist, in the core of which was a living fountain, which was the source of twelve rivers. These twelve volumes of water, as they flowed forth towards every direction of the compass, grew colder, until, changed into solid ice, the growing bulk did, by degrees, fill out the awful deep. From a world of light floating southward of the mist there issued a thawing, genial breeze, dissolving the ice, changing it into vapor, which rose in the shape of clouds. These gave birth to Ymri, the giant

Frost, and his daughter Andhumbla, the cow, on whose milk Frost lived. The cow's appetite was satisfied by her licking the hoar and salt from the ice, by which process there emerged one day from the frozen surface the hair of a man; the next day his full head protruded from the ice; on the third day the entire form loosened itself from the block of ice and salt, and there stood—a god. This god married a woman of whom we know only except that she was of the giant tribe, and from this marriage came the three god-brothers, Vile, Ve, and Odin. Their first effort was to dispose of Ymri, the giant Frost, whose massive trunk supplied material for the body of this earth; of his blood the seas were made; his bones were turned into all the mountains we know of; his skull was large enough to form the vault of the firmament; his hair was stiff enough to assume the shape of forests; clouds pregnant with snow, rain, and hail were the outcome of his brain, while his eyebrows furnished all that was necessary to build up a temperate zone for man's benefit, an Eden called Midgard. Hereupon Odin placed the luminaries above, telling them how to keep good time and season. Soon the sun's genial warmth called forth a delightful vegetation. The gods were pleased with the new world, but it appeared deserted, for there was not yet the human being, whom, by a combined effort they made of an ash-tree, and his wife of an alder, calling him Aske and her Embla. Aske and Embla received their most precious gifts directly from the gods. Odin gave them the soul, Vile reason and motion, and of Ve they received the five senses, human features, and speech. Midgard was their first abode, and they were the ancestors of all men.

With this bird's-eye view of heathen cosmogonies we turn to the Biblical panorama of creation, and we feel that, before the breath of Jehovah the Infinite, Incomprehensible, Eternal, all idolatrous illusions and confusions vanish like chaff before the mighty northwind. Here, two facts are assumed as beyond human comprehension, viz., the eternity of God and the co-eternity of matter. God is, ever was, and in the beginning of time created heaven and earth; the idea of creation being co-eternal with The Creator. God ever created;

the substance of the visible universe ever was, but not in its cosmic distribution, not in an astronomically mathematical relation, not robed in purified, glorious effulgence, nor confined to limited orbits, nor inhabited by the myriad life of plant, brute, and man. For the earth was long "formless and void," darkness hovered over the face of the deep, and The Spirit of The Creator was brooding over the face of the waters. Let no syllable pass unnoticed. The term רַחַץ in Hebrew has more than one meaning: it means to spread broodingly, lovingly as the eagle over his young, as the bird in the act of incubation, hovering, cherishing, vivifying, tending tenderly. The picture overpowers the mind. There is more than words can tell in that Hebrew word, conveying a dim notion of Eternal Wisdom brooding over and impregnating the shapeless, chaotic masses of darkness with the germs of transcendent beauty and glory, called forth by the fiat: "Let there be light!" Pass we not thoughtlessly over the fact that Israel's God caused chaos and eternal night to recede by bursting on them a universe of light. How deeply Milton feels when, having escaped the Stygian pool, he exclaims:—

"Hail, holy light! offspring of Heaven, first born,  
Or of the eternal, co-eternal beam;  
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light  
And never but in unapproached light  
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,  
Bright effluence of bright essence increate."

Beautiful as these lines are, and true, they but remind us of Solomon Ibn Gabirol's apostrophe to God as The Essence of primordial light, He, the All-in-All, omnipotent.

"Primeval light art thou, they of upright soul  
Behold, but hidden from the sinful eye  
Thy beam; thou, Light, unseen below, but for  
Immortal sight reserved, seen beyond  
With God, in heaven's ethereal height."

This had been written five centuries before the British poet saw light, the Christian forever re-dreaming the Jewish dreams, re-realizing Jewish realities. How much more truth than poetry in the thinker's intuitive consciousness, that light was

there before the stars, it being the universal element of which stars, planets, ether, air, all things and all creatures are full. The more nature is known, the wider prove her resources of light, beginning with the spark latent in the flint, and thus far reaching up to the electric candle. Light and heat are the two essential principles of life. Shall we not bow in awful reverence before The Spirit of spirits, who inspired the revelation of the only true cosmogony, which opens with: "Let there be light!" a glorious motto for an illustrious race to live up to, and strive by. Deny, if you can, that the Hebrew is man's spiritual eye. Who had the greatest of visions? The Aryan is forging artificial stars; the Semite takes them from the genuine heavens, he, the Prometheus of history.

And compatible with this luminous opening of the grand creative drama, is its sublime progression and its winding up with the loss of Eden by man, and his acquisition of intellectual light. Did man really fall when he learned to distinguish between good and evil, and reason, thought, took the place of instinct? Is not the whole scheme of a "fall" and a "redemption," of an "original depravity" and a "vicarious atonement" something of a melodrama or a comedy? If the fruit of knowledge was a curse to man, why do the best and the wisest pray, strive, long for wisdom? Just give it a thought. If light in the soul be a curse, why is light universal hailed as the blessing of blessings? Give them sight, Great Lord! Man did not fall when a ray of Thy radiance irradiated his mind; ah me, he fell when, sunk in error, he raised a weak, erratic mortal to the dignity of a second god. Judaism stands for light. One universal burst of light, and Chaos fled before Order and Beauty. Air, ether, land, fire, and water are con-signed to their destined places, and placed under immutable law, the very scientific process which the latest evolutionist deems necessary to render vegetable and animal life possible. The stars rotate and revolve in their orbits, and touched by the heavenly beam, earth produces grass, herbs, and trees after their kind, all potential with the power of reproduction. The waters of the deep, and all the elements being pregnant with life and being, it requires but The Divine fiat to people the



world, and no sooner are the elements under law, and each constellation in its place, than life breaks forth in abundance ; air, land, and water teem with life, flying, swimming, leaping, walking, singing, rejoicing. But there is no intellect, no God-like being to rule and beautify this world ; thus is man made in the likeness of his Creator, with dominion vested in him over all creatures ; he, the sublimest Divine conception into whom God breathed "the breath of life."

This is the Hebrew's great vision of creation. In contrast to that confusion most chaotic we meet in all known cosmogonies, our Genesis is graphic, certain, and positive ; even the dim background on which the grand picture is vividly drawn ; the only difference between our philosophy of creation and that of materialistic cosmogony, being our conscious God, in Whose stead science puts blind force. In our Genesis only the eternity of God antedates the eternity of matter, an affirmation which is henceforth the basis of Theistic philosophy. God being assumed eternal—an assumption necessitated by our finite faculties being unable to define things infinite—His innate Omnipotence necessarily follows, He being The Only One Whose unlimited might is the creative fiat. Whether the fiat works in a moment or in a millennium is immaterial, cycles being uncounted atoms in the eternity of Time. That matter was eternal and prior to the existence of light is clearly stated in our Scriptural text, wherein we are informed that, after ELOHIM had created the heavens and the earth in the beginning of time, "the earth was formless and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Unless resolved to lose ourselves in "chaos and eternal night" it is not easy to see where we could go for a scientifically philosophical account of the beginning of things beyond our Genesis.

And in that mystic vast wherein all things begin and culminate with the creation of man there is more than a mere adumbration of his destiny in this life, and in an after-state. Our cosmogony doubtlessly implies man's immortality. The mere statement that the human soul is breath of the Divine

Breath closes the point under consideration. If God be eternal can a part of His Spirit be mortal? In general to say that the Old Testament does not implicitly set forth the idea of the soul's immortality is to give a false version of the Spirit of Holy Writ. When the good Enoch walked with God, and was no more; "for God had taken him," where did God take him? When it is recorded that the patriarchs were gathered unto their fathers long before interment, and often far from the place of burial, unless it means the gathering in of the soul to those of the departed, the statement has no sense. When Moses disappears, when Samuel's shade is conjured by Saul, when Elijah ascends alive to heaven, does not all this imply a popular belief in an hereafter? What meaning had Jacob's dream with its revelation of God, angels, and heavenly regions, if the human spirit were excluded from those blissful abodes? And those spiritual visions of our prophets who see the Lord *Zebaoth* in the midst of cherubim and seraphim, all ablaze with glory, but for the dream of life eternal, the settled sense that the righteous share in the blessedness of the beyond, instead of comforting and inspiring the devout seer, would have sunk him into the darkest gloom. It were cruelty to reveal realms of bliss to longing, hoping, intellectual beings, whose inexorable destiny was decay, the grave, hopeless darkness, and decomposition. How in the name of truth and reason could one speak of Divine Goodness and Love? Why should virtue be cherished and vice be loathed, there being no retribution?

It is erroneous to take it for granted that in Biblical times the Jew saw in the coffin the end of all. One of the healthiest Hebrew qualities has ever been doubt, not begotten of a fertile imagination or absence of spiritual insight, but by a hungry yearning after truth unveiled, a glowing thirst to know the unknown. Who knoweth that the human soul ascends on high, while the breath of the brute remaineth below? queries the skeptic, gloomy *Kohleth*. It is he, however, who passes through darkness to light, and reaches the conclusion that "God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every pursuit, and there is an account for every deed." Again: "Every deed will God bring unto judgment, whether it be



good or whether it be bad." Also: "Fear God and keep His commandment, for this is the whole of man." Who spoke with more emphasis or clearness of Divine retribution? Think of "*God will bring unto judgment;*" of "when the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return unto God who gave it." Of course, *Kohleth* mentions neither a hell nor a paradise.

Then Job, the deep, melancholy, daring, skeptic, martyred Job, with his hundred elegies on human vanity, ignorance, suffering, disappointment, and death. How he soars in doubt and darkness, until the veil falls from his eyes, when, on a sudden, light bursts on him, and he knows that God's breath is in man who cannot die. "Truly there is a spirit in man inspired by the Almighty." And: "Well do I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will be the last after all creatures of dust; and after my skin is cut to pieces will this be, and then *freed from my body, I shall behold God!*" And Job typifies Israel. So the Psalmist, after the gloomiest views on the ends of mortal humanity, concludes in ecstatic fervor: "Thou wilt not abandon my soul to the grave." For did not God make man "but a little less than an angel?" Learning of his child's untimely death, David comforts himself: "I am going to him, but he will not return to me."

In face of such emphatic expressions of a deep-rooted faith current in ancient Israel, we are calmly informed by the non-Jewish theologian, that immortality was a Christian invention, and that the admission to paradise is inseparable from baptism. Considering the saint inquisitors and the chaste monks we are likely to meet in the orthodox heaven, we are not overanxious to share the company. Why thus unblushingly deny Israel the dream of his dreams, which is the beholding of God when "*freed from his body?*" Both Jesus and Mohammed made superhuman efforts to pass Jewish specie as their original coin, but the imitations will not work. The balm of Gilead, like the rose of Sharon, is inimitable, and the world grew wise and bold enough to see and to tell which is which and whose is whose. While roaming at large in the vast mazes of Jewish dreams, ideals, and realities, we shall have frequent opportunity

of alluding to this topic, of which our literature is full. Deathless, even in this perishable world, it were folly on the part of the eternal race to doubt immortal life in the beyond. Judaism recoils from defining mysteries, but it reposes unbounded confidence in the just retribution of the only Just and True God.

And as our God, so our ideal, our life, and our endeavors. We may reasonably expect a nation or denomination to be worse than its gods, but we can never expect the worshiper to be better than the power he worships. Thus can we account for the nature and dealings of the priests in Greece, Egypt, and Rome, the apostles in Judea, the saints in Arabia, the Druids in Britain, the cannibals on the Pacific Islands, the pontiffs and their agents in mediæval Europe. Man is at best like his God or his gods. The worshipers of Moloch, like those of Huitzilapachtli are like their gods, blood-thirsty, inhuman, ferocious, environed with altars reeking with the stench of human gore. Aye, man like his gods! How else could you explain the inquisitorial hells and horrid days of judgment Catholicism has instituted on earth? Was not each pope, each inquisitor, each monk the embodiment of Dante's Minos with his tail slung around the trembling reprobate? Man's God is in his heart, his mind, and his light and salvation, his darkness and perdition, or, as the vulgar call it, his hell and his heaven, spring from within, not from without, not from things and influences that are beyond his self. "I am that I am," said Almighty to Moses. "I am what I think, believe, feel, and act," says the Jew to the world. "If you force me to comply with your dictates, then I am no more: my individuality ceases and there is no cause for my being. My God is in my soul, whom else shall I obey? Urge me not to be prudent, to tread the beaten highways, to do as the Romans do, to swim with the current, vote with the majority, be one of the common flock, because I would otherwise be driven from the fat pastures. I reply, unless you convince me that growing fat is the end of life, I shall persist in being myself; in looking into my own heart, in accepting what seems to me true and rejecting what appears untrue."

That man is seldom as good as, and often much worse than, his gods history confirms. In Lacedæmon the aged citizen was required to loan his younger wife to the lusty youth for the benefit of the State. For Homer sang of Jupiter's immoralities, and it could never occur to mortals to be more chaste than their chief-god. So were the orgies of Bacchus supposed to be grateful to this god of the wine. It taxed all the eloquence of the best biographers to clear the name of Socrates of unspeakable imputations. If Greece was beautiful, like Cleopatra, she was profligate. And Rome, world-enslaving, kingdom-wrecking, ungenerous, greedy Rome, Rome of the Cæsars, was she not like the Rome of the popes, the very personification of her gods? Her delight the gladiator's agony; her triumph the execution of captive princes and the slavery of noble nations. What did she know of those higher sympathies with humanity which sprang from the highest God-ideal of Judea? Let the shade of Hannibal, the ruthless destruction of Carthage, the chains of an oppressed world speak.

Turn to Judea, and here, as elsewhere, you see man act as his God inspires him. What a distance between the God of Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Micah, Hillel, Philo, Saadia, Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, Mendelssohn and Montefiore, and that of Peter and Paul, of Hildebrand and Luther, of Calvin and the modern revivalists! What a difference in the ideal, what a distance in real life! Rather than a Ferdinand the Catholic, a Gregory IX., a James II., give us a Spinoza, a Thomas Paine, a Goethe, a Darwin. Rather a charitable skepticism than a Medusa-faced theology. We shall see, as we advance, how the real and the ideal coincide in Israel as well as everywhere in old and modern times.



## CHAPTER IV.

### OUR PROPHET'S DREAM.

IN the heart of ancient Israel prophecy was the ever-glowing pillar of light to the people and the guiding star of an exalted class of intensely religious statesmen, orators, and preachers. Similar in show, but wholly different in nature, was the occult science of divination that held unbounded sway among the heathen nations. Neither is that superstition a matter of the past or confined to the barbarous masses. The Oriental despot is still shaping his policy in conformity with the interpreted omens of his court astrologer. As late as the fifteenth century the Spanish Moors, then the most civilized people of Europe, were in their social, domestic, and state affairs entirely guided by the horoscope. When on issuing from the gates of Granada to the battle-field Boabdil's lance was broken, and soon after his pathway crossed by a fox, everybody gave up the ill-fated king as a victim of an inexorable fate, since at his birth the *santons* presaged evil to come for his kingdom during his reign. Among semi-barbarians and savages divination enjoys the veneration of religion; cards, plants, lots, the flight of birds, entrails of animals, the grunting of hogs, and the snuffing of the air by cattle, being considered instruments through which the future may be read. Ghosts and devils are supposed to commune with man through visions. We are told that the Kamchatkan expects the unwelcome Russian official as often as he dreams of dogs and vermin. As to soothsaying and fortune-telling by deciphering the lines of the hand, they are not out of fashion with many inhabiting quarters of considerable enlightenment. In the old Orient Chaldæa had her reputation established as the hot-bed of magic and astrological divination, while the Grecian oracle and the Roman augur were influences without which the earlier history of the

rise and development of those lands could scarcely be understood.

Jupiter being the chief divinity of Rome, the augur's province of anxious study was the sky, its flashes of lightning, as well as the flight and screams of birds, and the examination of the victims' entrails sacrificed to the gods. The greatest public transactions, such as the meeting of the senate, the installation of a new consul or prætor, the declaration of war or the making of peace, were all proceeded with according to the augur's interpretation of the given omens. Famous among the old Greeks were the oracles of Dodona, of Delphi, of Trophonius at Lebodea, and of Esculapius. One day a black dove directed from on high told the people of Dodona that Jupiter wanted an oracle established in their place, and they did as commanded. Another bird of the same feather delivered a similar message in the Lybian Oasis, where Jupiter had a temple. Some substitute black-eyed priestesses for birds in this story, whom Phœnicians stole at Thebes, in Egypt, to make them preside over the oracles of Dodona and the Oasis, theft being a minor offense in sacred endeavors sanctioned by the gods. Goats pasturing on Mount Parnassus and thrown into convulsions by vapors which issued from a cleft caused one of the shepherds to try the effect of the vapor on himself. He was similarly affected, talked incoherently; and this was taken as a manifest indication that some god or goddess—later believed to be mother earth or *Gea* herself—was willing to reveal some secrets for the benefit of man. A temple rose over the cleft, a priestess named Pythia had charge of it, her task being to cleanse herself in the crystal water of the fountain Castalia, then inhale the sacred air or steam, sink into convulsions, rave and talk unintelligibly, and thus supply the material for the deep wisdom of interpreting priests. The oracle of Trophonius was a fearful thing to consult, for the one who sought advice of him had to descend to a subterranean place, where he saw things so frightful that he never could smile again. The temple of Esculapius was the sick man's resort, for he was the god of healing and of medicine; he could cure every sickness, his favorite symbol being the



serpent. Apis was simply a bull, whose forebodings were clearly indicated by his accepting or declining the food proffered by the suppliant.

As in Rome, so in Greece, the greatest events, such as the Trojan war, the founding of new cities and colonies, were initiated, carried on, and closed by the guidance and inspiration of the oracle, whose ambiguous ravings were ambiguously interpreted by ambiguous priests, often barbarous, ignorant, superstitious, time-serving, and the tools of men in power. Seldom did the oracle foretell against the will or interest of the powerful, and his prophecies always had a loophole through which, should they turn out false, he could cunningly escape. One feels more inclined to respect that credulous barbarian who goes to sleep on the grave of some dead hero, hoping to secure in a vision good counsel from the hero's ghost, than those spurious oracles who based their prophecies on superstitious absurdities, or on the mad ravings of an ignorant woman in convulsions. But we must recognize in this fact the unfailing fitness of things, as it invariably comes to the surface in the general course of history. As the mythology and theosophy, so the ethics and the prophecy. As the gods, so their oracles.

What prophets must they then be who are inspired to proclaim, foretell the justice and mercy of Israel's Inscrutable, Infinite God ! We cannot much improve on the line which Philo Judæus draws between Judean and heathen prophecy. The Hebrew prophet, he maintains, is the chosen instrument through whom The Almighty makes His will known, the prophet obeying nothing but Divine inspiration ; he speaks in ecstatic delight, like the harmoniously-shaped instrument discoursing ravishing music in the hand of Apollo.—Not so the heathen oracle. He is too conscious of his business, too doubtful of his prophetic visions, to be frank, outspoken, straightforward, and positive in his forebodings. Having no power, no inspirations to reveal, he must needs deceive, obscurity being his safeguard against ridicule or popular skepticism. If he happened to hit the thing, well ; if he failed, there he stood, furnished with an evasive answer ; he was misunderstood. A

king consults him : " If I go to war with that land whose will be the victory ? " " If you go to war a city shall fall," answers the oracle. The monarch is sure of victory, goes to war, is defeated, and his capital is taken. And the oracle ? Well, he said, " A city shall fall ; " his prophecy was verified. The Delphian oracle declared Socrates to be the wisest Greek when nobody in Hellas had the least doubt about it. It was natural that an institution of this nature should, as ancient civilization advanced, become the laughing-stock of the knowing and the pliable tool in the hands of authority, tyrannical or otherwise, who, in order to derive sanction from the gods, exacted obedience of ignorance by causing false oracles to reveal a false message from above. These oracles were not yet silenced at the birth of Jesus, as Christian authors would have it, but they died their natural death at the birth of that higher philosophical thought which was the offspring of the fusion of Hellenic culture with Jewish intuition, Monotheism, and prophecy.

Our prophet's dream is something distinctly original, phenomenal, transcendental, and will admit of no comparison with anything that passes under the name of prophecy. Our prophet was, first of all, poet, patriot, and preacher ; a student of his time, and a far-seeing statesman. In a certain sense it may be said that Israel's prophetic genius was more emphatically accentuated in history than his priestly endeavors ; for our primitive patriarchs were more of the prophet than of the priest, while the nature of our divine law-giver leaves no doubt as to his deep prophetic intuitions. If seeing things hidden in dim futurity be the endowment of the prophet, who saw further than Abraham, Jacob, and Moses ? Abraham has the first mystic vision, looks into the stars, sees millenniums in advance of time ; Jacob, likewise, dreams the prophet's dream and his happy vista extends beyond any computation of ages, embracing a boundless future to be blessed in his posterity. His testamentary foreshadowings are a Divinely-inspired prophecy, unexcelled by any other we know of, and fulfilled in every particular. Whatever he tells his sons on his death-bed concerns things to happen only. " Gather yourselves together that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days," after which

each son hears a premonition of his future destiny. And how far the visions of Moses go out when he speaks of things to come ! The whole Book of Deuteronomy is one marvelous prophecy of what the times have in store for Israel, good or evil, dependent upon his relations to God and His Law of truth and righteousness. A chill runs through the blood on contemplating how the centuries verified those threatening visitations because of Israel's disloyalty to the Divine Law. Ah, me ! the unparalleled agonies of the children of the patriarchs among nations of "fierce visage, that will not have respect for the old, nor show favor to the young," as well as the loss of the Promised Land, were all predicted by Moses. An unrighteous, homicidal Church justified her murderous dealings with Israel's seed by pointing to the invented predictions of her mythical Jesus, a god who, we are assured, wished to be crucified for the salvation of man, and, having been treated as he wished, turned all his wrath, and that of his God-Father, against the very people who did their best to gratify his will. Ah, this madhouse of a world ! We know better, poor, hunted, loyal, scattered flock, beloved of Him who "chastises such as He loveth." On reading our great epic of a nineteen centuries' heroic martyrdom it is impossible not to recall the contents of the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, where every word and phrase uttered by inspiration is by this time a crystallized event, staring one in the eye as if to say : Just as I foretold, so it came to pass. So are the closing paragraphs of that same Book a perfect mirror, prophetically reflecting the events to come, events many of which are now reckoned with the past. Every tribe has here his future destiny foretold in a style of poetry and prophecy. It is all uncontrollable inspiration, the "Divine Spirit" prompting the spirit that dwells in the upright heart.

Yet neither the patriarchs nor Moses are generally considered prophets in the sense in which this term is commonly understood. We have been taught to look for the beginning of prophecy to the age of Samuel, to the school of which he is the acknowledged founder. Not until after Samuel does prophecy become the regular calling of an exalted class, who

feel themselves destined to proclaim and sustain the highest ideal in which Judaism culminates, the Unity of Jehovah, His unimpeachable justice, love, and mercy, and the universal brotherhood and equality of all men. The prophet's resistless authority is expressed in the four syllables, "Thus saith the Lord." He has no will, no policy of his own; it is the Lord *Zebaoth* who touches his lip with fire, opens his eyes, and causes him to speak undaunted, whether the guilty be king, queen, or people. Open, fearless, intensely patriotic, glowing with religious ardor for the sacred cause, the prophet, when called upon to denounce evil, is wholly forgetful of self, heedless of consequences, yielding himself up to the transport of fiery inspiration, using speech as sharp and cutting as a scorpion whip, and withering the object of his righteous indignation. We look in vain for another instance where men of apparently obscure origin, of whom nothing is said or heard ere they act, on a sudden, stand frowning before the absolute ruler of Israel with a seething prophecy on the lip, which sends a shudder through monarch, court, and people, conjuring terror and gloom over the whole kingdom. "King, you are a sinner, and vengeance is at your heel!" How mighty the picture Nathan sets up before David in the case of Uriah's murder. Stung in his conscience, unable to withstand the enormity of the crime, the humiliated king remorsefully rues his guilt: "I have sinned against the Lord!" What a triumph here of Divine prophecy over earthly majesty! and such things have happened again and again. What an ado has been made about a Peter the Hermit, who caused streams of innocent blood to flow in the interest of what? How many dissolute popes have been canonized without a hint at their corrupt individuality. Wellnigh sixteen centuries had to pass before a monk had the courage to name the corruptions of infallible papacy and celibate monachism, and the pope was rather slow in acknowledging the *compliment*, while the monk is proclaimed *the* Christian Reformer. Contrast Luther with Isaiah.

The power of Hebrew prophecy lies in its positiveness. There is no ambiguousness in the inspired denunciation and

the announcement of the impending punishment uttered by Nathan against the king. The child, the fruit of the crime, will die, and other evils will closely follow, all happening as foretold. It stands open to reason that an absolute monarch, as David was, would not readily submit to the reprimands and threatenings of a subject if the prophet's inspiration had not been generally accepted as a positive message from above. A plague decimating the Jewish population is, likewise, unhesitatingly imputed by another prophet, Gad, to the king, who, in disobedience to the Highest Will, caused a census to be taken of his people. High must have been the station of the prophet who could thus chastise the follies of an otherwise noble monarch.

So closely were patriotic prophecy and statesmanship interwoven that every wise king in Israel dared not for a moment disregard the advice and suggestions of the prophetic leader. The extent of the prophet's influence is clearly shown by Samuel's proceeding in his objecting to dynastic rulers, in his crowning, first, and later rejection of Saul, and in his anointing David to succeed that unfortunate monarch. But for Nathan's interference, Adonijah would have ruled instead of Solomon. It was the prophet Ahijah who transferred ten tribes of Israel to Jeroboam because of Solomon's degeneracy. But these influences would have been easily counteracted by statecraft had there not been a resistless power back of the prophet, which placed his authority beyond question, and that was the fulfillment of all he foretold in the Name of God. The proof of his Divine mandate lay in the fact of its realization. You may refute and disregard theories, but you are bound to face realities.—The culmination of prophetic glory, however, seems to have reached its zenith in the awfully mystic personality and supernatural doings of Elijah. Springing from perfect obscurity, with nothing save his stern dignity to shield him, with no record that we know of, but a manhood of intense virility; terribly fearless, sacredly devout, with earth and heaven open to his gaze, yea, ready to obey his bidding, Elijah, as the Himalayas among the mountains, towers loftily above all his predecessors and successors, a mystery forever



unsolved. Like a phantom apparition he emerges nobody knows whence, he disappears nobody knows whither, baffling the inhuman snares and persecutions of an unsteady, uxorious king and a heathenish queen, who leaves nothing untried to undo her most acrimonious foe. Next to the great enactment on Horeb the scene on Carmel is the most sublime and overpowering, and not to be accounted for by anything short of the prophet's immediate, awful intimacy with the Great Supreme. The spiritual world seems open to Elijah. Angels feed him, guard him; birds make shade for him; the Jordan's tide divides to let him pass dryshod; rain comes when he tells; fire flashes from heaven when he calls; nay, death himself yields up his victims when he commands. Poor necromancy was that of Jesus, indeed, confronted by the supernatural workings of an Elijah, who did not even deem it necessary to be crucified and buried in order to ascend transfigured to the skies. Such a career and such an end! A soul of fire, blasting vice with a lash of fire, proving Jehovah's Omnipotence by heaven's fire, and rising skyward in a chariot of fire, there to live in bliss, the intimate of God. Pitiful performers Mohammed and Jesus with their second-hand imitations of the inimitable. To change water into wine, and exorcise seven devils from one poor fallen female, are performances unworthy of the "Son of God," still less of God Himself. Our necromancers can do better.—A faint negative of Elijah's stupendous career are the recorded miracles performed by the son of Mary, who likewise fled to a desert, lived on little or nothing, communed with angels, and walked on the water. The only omission in that record we sincerely deplore is the ascension in unchanged human form which Jesus found impossible to accomplish. Ah, what a Tophet of carnage, crime, outrage, and sin such an end of his would have spared this poor deluded world!—For whom shall we exchange our Elijah, the nonpareil? No wonder this prophet has, to the Jewish mind, become the symbol of the highest man, sage, prophet, and angel all in one. He, the martyr to truth below, Israel's pleader above, harbinger of good, the bearer of food for the poor, of healing for the sick; present at every union and consummation of bridal



love, and sitting on the chair where the babe's body is bared for the operation that admits him to the Abrahamic alliance. Having an Abraham, a Moses, a Samuel, and an Elijah to boast of as fathers and teachers, who would grow jealous of races who have their Homer and their Virgil, their Plato and their Cato, their Buddha, Zoroaster, their Jesus and Mohammed? Truly, small figures are these in face of those un-earthly lofty ones who are the foundation of all. To be a Jew, does it not mean to keep the ethereal stream of prophecy alive? Does it not imply war against the degenerate Ahabs, the dissolute, murderous Jezebels, and the never-failing false prophets of Baal? The prophet is the authorized interpreter of the Divine Will, for, says Amos, "The Eternal will do nothing unless He reveals His secrets to His servant, the prophet."

The incalculable blessings which flow from prophetic Judaism for the cause of religion at large is to be acknowledged in the reality that the sweet hopes and golden promises it is constantly holding out for the righteous are not exclusively intended for the chosen race, but for humanity as one family. Neither the prophet's ideal dream nor his vindication of Divine justice and goodness implies such a narrow limit as, at his time, excluded Judea from all other creeds and races. No, the prophet recognizes neither geographical, nor tribal, nor racial boundaries and limitations; he speaks of humanity to humanity as children of the same Eternal Father; he wages relentless war against paganism, but has the tenderest love for the pagan, whom he invites to smite his idols and turn toward the "mountain of the Lord." His fraternal greeting is, "Have we not all One Father? Did not One God make us all?" but he has "no peace for the wicked." And those glorious dreams, those rosy visions he unfolds for the just, the upright, the faithful, and the servants of the Eternal One! Chaos and darkness, pestilence and leprosy, sickness and famine, death and *sheol*, the fires of heaven and the elements of nature, he invokes to rise simultaneously and wipe out vice and corruption before the wrath of The Lord; but no poet equals him in grandeur of speech, in beauty of simile and metaphor, in

depth of pathos and cataracts of seething eloquence when, catching the inspiration of heavenly peace, he pours forth in sweet torrents his yearning prophetic soul, telling of that Messianic era when the sword shall be changed into a ploughshare, "the wolf shall dwell with the sheep, the leopard lie down with the kid; the calf, the lion's whelp, and the fatling shall lie together, and a little boy shall lead them; and the cow shall feed with the she-bear, together shall their young ones rest; like the ox the lion shall eat straw; the suckling shall play on the hole of the asp, on the basilisk's den the weaned child shall lay his hand; they shall not hurt nor destroy on all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of The Lord, as water covers the sea." The salvation of man lies in "knowledge of The Lord," ignorance being the origin of sin and evil. A true appreciation or depreciation of things perishable is, in the mind of the prophet, bound to bring about an ideal and spiritual yearning for things eternal, for virtue, love of God, and love of man. The keynote, the ideal of prophetic Judaism, is "the knowledge of The Lord," whom to know means to be like Him, wise, good, and true. False prophet he who recommends the sword as an instrument of conversion; false apostles they who preach hatred and division, practice fraud and persecution. The true prophet's message is "peace, peace to the near and the far." Dr. K. Lippe sums up the difference between Jewish and Christian prophecy in the following contrast of principle. The Lord promises through the prophet Malachi to send Elijah "before the coming of the day of The Lord, the great and the dreadful. And he shall turn back the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers." Read Matthew x. 34. "I am come to arouse man against his father, the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law," such is the policy of the "prince of peace." That our prophet's dream be realized the Jew was Providentially preserved, but his ways and means must be prophetic, fearless in branding vice as hateful to God and man, eloquent in glorifying the good, the beautiful, and the true. Such is the prophet's ideal.

Nobody should write the last line on Hebrew Prophecy without an allusion to its magnificent imagery, the fullness of the picturesque, the beauty of style, and the awful mystic sublimity with which the visions are received and imparted. In every case the seer speaks of self as perfectly passive and objective, until placed in unearthly surroundings, confronted with mystic sights, and called upon to accept the charge of delivering a peremptory message. However strange the vision the message is simple and direct, forewarning events sure to happen, unless the cause be removed. Though environed with myriads of angels, cherubim, and seraphim; though aglow with dazzling impenetrable light, it is always God Himself who speaks and trains the prophet's lips to reveal His decree, even to the wording and illustration. Beautiful is the comparison of Israel's relation to God with that of the bride to the bridegroom, whose young love or honeymoon is compared with that period when young Israel was lovingly followed by The Almighty through the desert. Zion is likened to a divorced mother, who, however, has no bill of divorcement; or to a vineyard intended to bring forth grapes, instead of which its produce is worthless. Disloyal Jerusalem is a barren woman, whose husband, The Lord, should she turn loyal again, promises to make her fruitful. But the most frequent likeness of Israel the prophet avails himself of is light. The nations and their sovereigns are to be enlightened by a radiance bursting from Zion. "Through thee the world's ancient ruins shall be rebuilt," says the prophet, ever having the universal welfare in eye. Prophecy is universal Freemasonry, its mission being constructive, not destructive—a perpetual building up of the temples of humanity fallen or desecrated.

A thrilling vision is that of Ezekiel, who tells us how the spirit seized and landed him in a valley full of dry human bones. He is commanded to speak to the bones in the Name of The Lord, telling them that by Divine interference they would once more be restored to life. Doing as he is bidden he hears the bones rattle, sees them join, assume all the signs of animation, sinew, flesh, skin, and all, except the soul, the principle of life. He is again induced to prophesy: "From the four

winds come, O spirit, and breathe into the dead bones that they may live.”—“And there came into them the spirit and they lived and rose on their feet an exceedingly great host.” Reference is made in Pharisaic literature to this ghastly vision as unquestionable evidence of bodily resurrection;<sup>10</sup> but what should not be overlooked is the prophet’s deepest consciousness of Divine Unity, “From the four winds come, O spirit,” since everywhere is the Spirit of The Lord.

How preposterous to base a trinitarian creed on Jewish Prophecy! The most glorious vision of the Messianic era closes with “On that day shall The Lord be One and His Name One.” God’s sovereign Unity is the prophet’s dream and Israel’s ever-flowing song. Hear Ibn Gabirol:—

“Thou art the One, all numbers’ origin,  
Creation’s only rock; aye, One art Thou,  
Whose Oneness human wisdom cannot sound,  
Unable Unity like Thine to grasp;  
Thou Only One, who neither grows nor shrinks;  
Uncounted Thou, unnumbered, One, unchanged,  
Unchangeable, nameless, formless; One, whose bounds  
To fathom overstrains the finite mind.”

The prophet’s ideal dream is the most glorious spiritual dream Israel ever dreamed. Had that dream continued with all its supernal adumbrations and earthly manifestations, no creed could have ever raised its head above prophetic Judaism, presenting the loftiest ethical and religious panacea that the world needs to be cured of all moral and mortal ills. But rabbinism did not prove a sufficient spiritual continuation of the life-fountain of empyrean Prophecy. Had the Talmud continued a living tradition, had its representatives and expounders revealed prophetic intimations of a never-ebbing spirituality flowing from a never-ebbing universe, its influence over the destiny of Israel and humanity at large might have turned out incalculably vast. As a compiled mass of variegated lore, crystallized law, tradition, humor, fable, wit, and allegory, with a rigid codex as the petrified resultant, it is an amazing monument of Jewish industry, genius, imagination, history, and

<sup>10</sup> כמים שהחיה יחזקאל עמדו על רגליהון. אמר קב"ה ליחזקאל החיה כמים וכו'.

stern religious loyalty and formalism, but never, no, never a living stream of spiritually potential possibilities. The Talmud helped to perpetuate Judaism in the same manner as the Chinese wall helped to perpetuate Mongolian stagnation and Confucian ethics. It did embalm and localize Judaism and favor an exaggerated separatism, both of which are not compatible with Israel's world-redeeming mission. The prophet was infinitely more cosmopolitan and humanitarian than the Talmudist. The opportunities Talmudical lore offered the Jewish mind for pilpulistic or logical exercise during a period of universal darkness were inestimable, and the *charef* or Talmudical reasoner was justly considered a marvel of hair-splitting finesse, but the sublimest idea of prophetic Judaism was almost lost sight of, a severe, often unmeaning, ceremonialism taking its place. In this way did the beneficent warm gulf-stream of transcendental Prophecy first congeal into the mighty glacier of Talmudism. Then, breaking up into prodigious icebergs, and drifting along on the sea of centuries, it eventually took the shape of austere *'aruchs*, voluminous tomes, replete with dry regulations, long-winded discussions of trivialities, in all, dead weights pressing heavily on the intellectual elasticity of the most arduous and active of races. So did it come to pass that, as somebody pointedly remarked, while Catholicism had its arbitrary living pope, unprophetic Judaism bent its knee before a dead hierarch in the shape of an infallible, intolerant, unyielding, uncompromising series of codices.

Fortunately the genial currents of a resuscitating civilization had the salutary effect of convincing the enlightened son of Israel that, in abandoning the prophetic ideal, he came very nigh being overwhelmed by stronger intellectual and spiritual powers that derived their vitality from that very source he so disloyally neglected—Prophecy. When we turn to glance at the Talmud it will be time for us to do justice to that world of picturesque beauty and glory. Yet do we hail that auspicious moment in modern Jewish history when the prophet's dream of the ages began once more to soften the frozen forms of hitherto irreconcilable rabbinism, which must either yield to Divine inspiration, and adjust itself to the living spirit of



Judaism, or become a relic of an unprogressive, uninspired past.

Judaism cannot subsist, still less flourish, without prophetic inspiration. Israel's God is not One of the past, but One of all times, and as He did inspire the "upright heart and true," so will He still give spirit of His Spirit to such as speak in His Name. Judaism cannot feed on dead forms, no, not even on glories that are bygone. Our past had its prophets, we must have them, too, men with a supernal dream, a lofty ideal, enkindled by the fire of heaven, self-sacrificing, fearless in stemming the tide of corruption; holding up a mirror to vice; branding infamy, sensuality, infidelity; sweeping off, like Elijah, the prophets of Baal, the venal slaves with whom Israel ever was and is afflicted; men who have an inspiration to reveal, a truth to tell, and who have the manhood to unfold it unadorned, unvarnished, sincere; men deep in knowledge and nature, resistless in eloquence, indefatigable in effort, recoiling from no danger, no threat, no difficulty; ready, like Daniel, to face the lion in his den, like Nathan, to front the guilty monarch in his royal robe, the fulmination of God's lightning on their lip; uttering the soul's resistless fire in seething streams, till vice is blasted and virtue shines as burnished gold, in His Name Who everlastingly dwells in the pure and loyal heart. In this way alone will the prophet's dream and ideal of humanity blended with Divinity be triumphantly realized.



## CHAPTER V.

### OUR POET'S DREAM.

It seems utterly impossible to say where Jewish poetry begins and prophecy ends, or *vice versa*, particularly when the contents of our Scriptures are to be first the subject of a brief examination. If beauty of style, splendor of picture, fable, parable, simile, and allegory; if depth of sentiment, transport of soul, Divine fervor, the fire of thrilling inspiration, in a word, if God-intoxication causes the strings of the poet's deepest being to vibrate in gleeful, sacred utterance, then is our prophet poet by the grace of the Most High, he being the almost unconscious harmonious instrument through whom Divinity communes with humanity. It is neither an exaggeration nor is it an unjustified assertion, nor an original idea, that the Old Testament is one grand, incomparable, unbounded epos, the epic *par excellence* in which the past, present, and future of humanity are poetically, prophetically, and Providentially mirrored, the universe supplying the illustrations. Let the critics criticise. Let science progress; it cannot but illumine the religious ideal as it is transcendently set forth in the prophecy and poetry of our Bible. Those twenty-four books which make up our Scriptures are the perfect Iliads of the Hebrew race, the clearest manifestation of our Deity in the spirit and consciousness of man; they are the corner-stone of the Synagogue, the foundation of the liberal Church and Mosque; they sprung from the heart of Israel and are inseparably interwoven with the history and destiny of mankind.

With breath of fire, in speech of living flame  
The wizard prophet in Jehovah's Name  
Links earth to heaven with a golden chain,  
And who would say, that he foretold in vain?  
Since he, who preaching wandered forth from Ur,  
He of God's phalanx first great warrior,

To him who Zion's fall did weep in strains,  
 He bard and prophet in Chaldea's plains,  
 Great spirits rose to make man onward march  
 Of mystic visions building arch on arch,  
 Till, like the bow that mirrors forth the sun,  
 The sky-built pyramid they stood upon,  
 While at its base unthinking mortals plod,  
 Upleads the wiser to the feet of God.  
 Wipe out from memory all Delphian lies,  
 Dodona's tricks, Eleusis' mysteries;  
 Forever silence Heliconian glee,  
 Let thought be mute, be mute philosophy,  
 The world shall move, our prophets being there,  
 Who, Atlas-like, of heaven the pillars bear,  
 See God in man, all man in God declare;  
 In sacred visions, speech of molten gold,  
 A heavenly kingdom, peace on earth foretold.

This is not intended to pass as a piece of poetry; we feel it in our heart of hearts. We can imagine an ancient Greece without a Homer; a world-ruling Rome without a golden period of classical literature; Britain might prosper without her Miltons, Germany without her Goethes, and Italy without her Dantes; but how conceive of positive Monotheism without an Old Testament? How imagine a Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedism, a world of law and order, without *our Bible*? What articulate nonsense to say that Buddhism, Confucianism, or any other heathenism, could in any tolerable manner serve as a substitute for that matchless Book which, like the silent ocean mirroring infinity with all that is visible in it, reflects the faith and doubt, the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, the longings and dreamings, the strength and weakness, the truth and error, the beastly and the Divine, that is propelling, stirring, and agitating human life. And seeing the steady and conscious progress of the race from the useless to the useful, the unjust to the just, the ugly to the beautiful, the false to the true, the material to the ideal; observing that the beauty and power of manhood are always found in proportion to the moral quality of the individual and the race, one cannot fail to realize the eternal rule of mind over matter, light over darkness, good over evil, the ideal over the physical world; God over space, time, law, and all! We cannot, even

by admitting the theory of the survival of the fittest, see mere accident in the historical wonder of Israel's preservation amid the general wreckage of kingdoms and empires. The epic grandeur of our Scriptures reveals what evolution and all the sciences never can approximately reach; they that would turn the universe into an unaccountable, unconscious machine, self-made, with time, space, matter, and motion as blind motors.

As a picture gallery of living figures unadorned and true as nature herself, our Scriptural epos challenges comparison. Is it Virtue, you see her therein beautifully glorified; is it Vice, therein you see her, too, paraded in dismal nudity. Truth is the object of the whole. God alone is Great, Perfect, All-Wise; but man, whether he be the greatest law-giver, the sweetest singer, the greatest and wisest king, or the sublimest of prophets, is fallible and frail. Moses errs; his Books put on record his error and his punishment. David sins; posterity is informed about it. Solomon falls from grace; we are made to admire his wisdom and deplore his fall. Elijah's severity towards the prophets of Baal is not approved of by later generations, and his sudden translation is imputed to that act of cruelty. From beginning to end our Biblical heroes and heroines are introduced to us as instruments of the highest Will, men and women liable to err, not at all resembling those infallible saints of the New Testament, who are nothing if not supernatural. Inspired genius is the striking quality of Jewish heroism. You meet in our Bible as nowhere else, law-giver, warrior, judge, prophet, statesman, sage, and poet, all in one and the same person, as exemplified in the careers of Moses, Deborah, Samuel, David, Solomon, and Isaiah. In a trice, the prophet is poet, the poet is prophet, the farmer is judge, the shepherd is king, warrior, statesman, and bard. Give us another Deborah who is judge, general, and poetess in a continent where woman is at this date considered little more than the domestic animal. Poetry appears to be singularly congenial to the Semitic, intensely so to the Hebrew's nature. On a sudden the Spirit of the Lord is on him who either sings or prophesies. Nobody dreams that Samuel's devout, modest mother, whose pious tears flow

in streams while praying in Eli's Sanctuary, is more than an ordinary brave woman, when lo, and behold! Hannah sings the loftiest of themes, God's justice, love, and grace. "The bow of the mighty is broken, and those who stumbled are girded with strength. The Lord's are the pillars of the earth on which He hath set the world. Out of the heaven He thunders on His adversaries. The wicked shall be made silent in darkness." This is the first and the last time we hear of Hannah. So is Deborah's poetical genius, as her entire appearance, a delightful surprise unexpected in womanhood at such a date in such a place. When The Lord goeth forth from Seir, the earth trembles, the heavens drop, the clouds melt, yea, "the mountains melt away because of the Presence of The Lord."—"From heaven they fought, the stars in their orbits fought against Sisera." What shall we say of this daughter in Israel who excels as judge, triumphs as general, and immortalizes the event in lines of unexcelled beauty? Sappho, the poetess, who was regarded as the tenth Muse, the "miracle" of antiquity, has, like all heathen "miracles," not turned out a miracle of virtuous womanhood, and her poetry, though reputed as exquisitely delicious, could scarcely bear comparison with the song of souls inspired by the God Whose Breath causes the mountains to melt. We are informed that Sappho's favorite themes were the gods, the passions, nature's sweet products, so that if she sang beautifully she could not have risen very high. What imparts unsurpassed excellence to Hebrew prophecy and poetry is the overpowering grandeur of the theme they both contemplate. Creation and its wonders, man and his destiny, God and the universe, death and eternity, are the ever-present subjects of the Hebrew bard. Therefore is there but one Isaiah, one Job, and one Psalmist. Read Carlyle's view of Job so grudgingly given by the pungent Aryan on the great deep, unequalled Hebrew: "I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew, such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book! All men's book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending

problem—man's destiny and God's ways with him here on this earth; and all in such free-flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody, and the repose of reconciliation. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart; so true every way; true eyesight and vision and all things; material things not less than spiritual; the horse, hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? He laughs at the shaking of the spear! Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind; so soft and great; as the summer midnight; as the world with its seas and stars. There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit."

We ask: Is it a misfortune to be misunderstood? Seems it not the lot of uncommon men, things, and principles to be misunderstood? The ancient heathen, wholly incapable of conceiving One Universal Divinity, and a religion transcendently spiritual, wondered at the Hebrew race, their abnormal way of worship, and their still less comprehensible God, a God that defied every anthropomorphic personification. So does Tacitus scoffingly allude to the Jewish Temple of Zion, wherein there was not an image or statue to be seen; and Juvenal fails to realize how intellectual beings could adore "nothing but clouds and Deity in the skies." And have Judaism and the Jews been since understood? Are they understood now? We invoke the genius of history to do us justice. The Jew has long felt like those ill-fated Spaniards whom the bloody Aztec priests sacrificed to their horrid gods. A million howling voices, a myriad of braying drums and yelling trumpets drowned the feeble protest of the victimized Jew. Gellert's fable tells how the straight-walking and plain-talking man happened to land in a strange country where all were lame of foot and stuttering in speech, and the halting and stammering population gazed with astonishment on the stranger of straight limbs, crying: "Behold, that poor man is not at all lame!" But no sooner did he open his lips, than a cry of pity shook the atmosphere: "Ah, neither does he stammer!" This is not at all a fable. Shakespeares or Carlyles,



Gibbons or Wagners, like many others of greater or smaller genius, are but children of their surroundings and habits, seldom rising very high above current prejudices. If that great Bard of Avon had known Jews and Judaism as Lessing and George Eliot, would he have left us the caricature of a *Shylock*? If Dickens had possessed as much knowledge of Israel's ethical and spiritual life as he had of the taste and fancy of the mob, he would not personify his ignorance of a great people's character by the production of an odious *Fagin*. Only think of an unchristian genius who would look for material in the annals and daily happenings of Christian countries. What a harvest of refined felons he would find; sharpers, gamblers, pickpockets, swindlers, a variety of criminals, highwaymen, assassins, murderers of wives, parents, children; fiendish train-wreckers; a hundred penitentiaries, full of the lowest specimens of humanity, are there, ready to supply his muse with all sorts of despicable subjects. Imagine a good Christian hear his faith associated with all of those criminals, and you will realize the outrage you commit on the Jew as often as his sacred name and fame are slighted by a caricature of some sordid individual of whom his own race is ashamed. No, if Carlyle ever caught a glimpse of the Jew's dreams, ideals, and realities, he would not have dipped his pen in venom as often as the name Jew came in his way. Who could write "Job" but a Hebrew? The grandest thing must needs be written by such as have the grandest faith, conceptions, the deepest dreams, the grandest ideals, and the grandest God. How could any pagan upsoar in thought, vision, and song as high, penetrate mystery as deep as the Hebrew with his great yearning soul, his earnest manhood, his daring genius to fathom The Infinite in infinity? The loftiest form of poetical expression—the lyric, religious, or hymnal song—attained its sublimest height in the heart of Israel. There they are, a hundred and fifty wonder odes, possibly the work of few, probably the songs of many Jewish hearts and minds. What a dream! what a reality! of all the deep the deepest, of all the sweet the sweetest; summing up all—all, birth, death, life, pain, sorrow, faith, hope, trust, joy, delight, ecstasy, gloom, human



greatness, human smallness, mortality and immortality, the glories of earth and the wonders of heaven—all, God and eternity. Such are the Psalms Milton dared to translate, not to imitate. Who could, but a Hebrew, but a Hebrew heart touched by the sacred fire of the highest empyrean, strike such heavenly notes? Read them; aye, and in Hebrew, if possible; for translated, though glorious, they are but the reflected splendor of the sunny beam received from the cool moon. The Psalms are a sea of hymnal glories, the lyric of lyrics, matchless, ethereally inspired, such as angels may sing in the Presence of Him enthroned on the *Merchabah*. Here are a few verses by Milton, and a free translation of a Psalm by Byron:—

“ Among the holy mountains high  
 Is His foundation fast,  
 There seated is His sanctuary,  
 His temple there is placed.  
 Zion’s fair gates the Lord loves more  
 Than all the dwellings fair,  
 Of Jacob’s land though there be store  
 And all within his care,  
 City of God most glorious things  
 Of thee abroad are spoke;  
 I mention Egypt, where proud kings  
 Did our forefathers yoke;  
 I mention Babel to my friends,  
 Philistia full of scorn,  
 And Tyre with Ethiop’s utmost ends,  
 Lo, this man there was born.—  
 Both they who sing and they who dance  
 With sacred songs are there,  
 In the fresh brooks, and soft streams glance,  
 And all my fountains clear.—  
 My soul doth long and almost die  
 Thy courts, O Lord, to see,  
 My heart and flesh aloud do cry,  
 O living God for Thee.—  
 Happy, who in Thy house reside,  
 Where Thee they ever praise,  
 Happy whose strength in Thee doth bide,  
 And in their heart Thy ways.—  
 They pass through Baca’s thirsty vale,  
 That dry and barren ground,  
 As through a fruitful watery dale  
 Where springs and showers abound.—

Be not Thou silent now at length  
 O God, hold not Thy peace,  
 Sit Thou not still, O God of strength,  
 We cry and do not cease;  
 For lo, Thy furious foes now swell  
 And storm outrageously,  
 And they that hate Thee, proud and fell  
 Exalt their heads full high.  
 Against Thy people they contrive  
 Their plots and counsels deep,  
 Them to ensnare they chiefly strive  
 Whom Thou dost hide and keep.—  
 How long will ye pervert the right  
 With judgment false and strong,  
 Favoring the wicked by your might  
 Who thence grow bold and strong?  
 Regard the weak and fatherless,  
 Despatch the poor man's cause,  
 And raise the man in deep distress  
 By just and equal laws;  
 Defend the poor and desolate  
 And rescue from the hands  
 Of wicked men the low estate  
 Of him that help demands.—  
 When I behold Thy heavens, Thy fingers' art  
 The moon, the stars, which Thou so bright hast set  
 In the pure firmament, then saith my heart,  
 Oh, what is man that Thou rememberest yet.—”

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“We sat down and wept by the waters  
 Of Babel, and thought of the day  
 When our foe, in the hue of his slaughters!  
 Made Salem's high places his prey,  
 And ye, O her desolate daughters!  
 Were scattered all weeping away.

“While sadly we gazed on the river  
 Which rolled on in freedom below,  
 They demanded the song, oh, never  
 That triumph the stranger shall know!  
 May this right hand be withered forever,  
 Ere it string our high harp for the foe.

“On the willow that harp is suspended,  
 O Salem! its sound should be free,  
 And the hour when thy glories were ended  
 But left me that token of thee:  
 And never, shall its soft tones be blended  
 With the voice of a spoiler by me.”

Vain effort. Luther despaired of making "the Hebrew speak German." And who succeeded? It is a tongue they who derived inspiration from Helicon could not fathom, could not translate. In every other tongue words have meaning, express metaphor or figure; in Hebrew poetry every word is itself a mystic allegory, hiding more than it tells, and telling more than it seems. Translate if you can כל עצמותי האכרנה ה"י מי כמוך "All my bones exclaim: Lord, who is like Thee!" It conveys not in English what it tells in Hebrew. צמאה נפשי לאלהים לאל חי "My soul thirsts for God, for the Living God." This gives no idea of the ecstasy that Hebrew phrase expresses to the God-intoxicated Jew. אשכיר חצי כרם וחורבי "My arrows shall be drunken with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh." Where was warlike manhood expressed in so few words? בשעשעם מחזיונות לילה בנפלי תרדמה על אנשים "In intense thoughts out of the visions of night when deep sleep falleth on man." פחד קראני ורעדה ורכ עצמותי הפחד "Dread came over me, with trembling, and it caused all my bones to shudder." Ah, speak not of translation; the mystery of these two lines no speech can render; it is the spiritual dream of man—poor, hungry, longing soul—who, waking or dreaming, shudders at the silence of space and time. And the two words ממעמקים קראתיך "From the gulfs of my being I invoked Thee, Lord;" or this description of God's garment, הדר והדר לבשה "With glory and majesty art Thou clothed, art wrapped in light as with a garment." Unacquainted with the Hebrew's idiom it is impossible to comprehend his prophetic and poetic genius.

In our earliest childhood we were shown two Hebrew letters in the form of two constellations in the starry firmament, the *Yad* and the *Tav*, the first being the first letter of the Ineffable Name, the other being the first letter of the Hebrew word Law, *Torah*. You may see those letters distinctly on any clear eve, and, remembering mankind's indebtedness to what has been revealed, taught, and sung in Hebrew, one feels profound reverence for an oppressed race whose soul feeds on the Divinest of dreams, and reads its sacred alphabet in the stars. The coincidence is certainly noteworthy. In our Midrashic literature we find it explicitly stated that the letters

of the Hebrew alphabet are conscious, spiritual beings, who claimed certain rank and distinction in the mysterious drama of creation. The *Aleph* having shown the most modesty, secured the especial prominence of being the first letter in the Decalogue. When on descending from Sinai, Moses, seeing the golden calf, dropped the tablets on which God's finger engraved The Ten Commandments, only the form was broken, say our sages, the letters flying about in the air,<sup>11</sup> indicating therewith, that though violence may be done to the visible form of the Divine Law, as an ethereal power it is eternal, invulnerable, neither tyranny nor fire having any power over it.<sup>12</sup> With a language so sacred and heavenly, the Hebrew could not but meditate on the sublimest and holiest of things. He who knows Hebrew well will glory in it above any other tongue.

The 104th Psalm is justly considered a perfect picture of God's making and ruling the world. The singer blesses The Lord, immeasurably great, clothed in glory and majesty, wrapped in light as in a garment; who stretcheth the heavens like a curtain; who founded the skies on beams of water; clouds are his chariot; "who walketh on the wings of the wind," making winds His messengers, fire His ministers. "The earth He founded on her bases immovable to eternity." Then these lines: "He makes darkness His hiding place, round Him a pavilion of dark waters, thick clouds of the skies." But all darkness, "hail, stones, and coals of fire" pass away before His radiance. He thunders in heaven, His speech is hail and fire. "The heavens proclaim the glory of God." Within, without, above, below, around, everywhere the Hebrew bard feels and sees the Lord, ever filled with painful longing to penetrate the veil of mystery. Small are the agonies of Prometheus, feeble the light he had stolen of the gods, when compared with the more than human struggle, heroic resignation, Divine sorrow of the martyred Job. He sees that he cannot see, he knows that he does not know. That limited human wisdom that shrinks amazed at the Supreme Unapproachable Intelligence who uttered it, who felt it so deeply

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<sup>11</sup> לוחות נשתברו ואותיות פורחות. <sup>12</sup> גילין נשרפין ואותיותיו פורחות.

before, who, after Job? One paragraph tells: Man knows where to find silver, knows the place of gold; iron is taken out of dust, stone is melted into copper; he sets an end to darkness, brings precious stones from the shadow of death. In the earth there is fire, lead springs from her bosom, also the sapphire and golden dust is there, in places the vulture's eye has not surveyed, the ravenous beast has never trodden. "But wisdom, where shall she be found, and where the place of understanding? Man knows not her value, and she is not found in the land of the living. The deep saith, 'Not in me is she,' and the sea saith, 'She is not with me.' Yea, she is hidden from the eyes of the living, from the fowl of heaven she is concealed. Perdition and death say, 'We heard a report of her.' God alone understandeth her way, and He knoweth her place." If Socrates was the wisest Greek because he knew the limits of human reason, was not Job the wisest of men, the noblest martyr, the typical, daring, searching, doubting, yet ever loyal son of Israel? But we are fishing for pearls in the ocean to procure but a slight specimen of its uncounted, unvalued treasures. Our Bible is one continuous, varied poem presenting every kind and shade of poetry. Beside the lyric, there is the epic, the dramatic, the didactic, idyllic, the elegiac, and every other species that graces any literature. "The language of poetry is thus the language of the inspired volume." Says Gilfillan, "The Bible is a mass of beautiful figures; its words and its thoughts are alike poetical; it has gathered around its central truth all natural beauty and interest; it is a Temple with one altar and One God, but illuminated by a thousand varied lights, and studded with a thousand ornaments. It has substantially but one declaration to make, but it utters that in the voices of the creation. It has pressed into its service the animals of the forest, the flowers of the field, the stars of heaven, all the elements of nature. The lion spurning the sands of the desert, the wild roe leaping over the mountains, the lamb led in silence to slaughter, the goat speeding to the wilderness; the rose blossoming in Sharon, the lily drooping in the valley, the apple-tree bowing under its fruit; the great rock shadowing a weary land, the river gladdening

the dry place; the moon and the morning star; Carmel by the sea and Tabor among the mountains; the dew from the womb of the morning, the rain upon the mown grass, the rainbow encompassing the landscape; the light, God's shadow; the thunder, His voice; the winds and the earthquake, His footsteps: all such varied objects are made—as if naturally so designed from their creation—to represent Him to Whom the Book and all its emblems point. Thus, the quick spirit of the Book has ransacked creation—to lay its treasures on Jehovah's altar." A beautiful but incomplete picture this; for it is mainly to the emblems of life and being, death and eternity, the relation of the finite to the Infinite, comprising the visible and the invisible universe, that the poetry of the Bible is devoted, accentuating the deepest and the highest in speech and imagery that the human soul intuitively accepts as the truest, the Divinest.

But the Hebrew's poetical genius ceased not with the closing of the last line of that sacred volume. During the Dark Ages and in modern times the Jew, though unwelcomed in the several provinces of the fine arts, had nevertheless floods of melody to inform a flinty world that he was living, believing, suffering, sorrowing, hoping, and dreaming—melody in words and in notes. For eighteen hundred years the Jew has been the real Job of history, sorrow crowding on sorrow, affliction on affliction, outrage on outrage, until life became bitter, unbearable, and the grave the only hope, the haven of peace "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." Human hatred, bloody persecution, black accusation, poverty, disgrace, humiliation, slaughter, enforced nomadism, all he takes from Christian hand with devout resignation, his eye turned to heaven, the tear flowing, and the only question being: "Just God, how long will Thy anger be turned against Thy people, who, as tainted wethers, are given to slaughter?" There is no poetry in this, but religion. Such faith and self-abnegation, such Divine sorrow and sweet resignation as would do honor to the giant of Uz! During the crusades, when Jewish blood was flowing in streams, no poetry was sung in Israel, but the heartache was appeased by a mournful prayer—the



יהוא רחום—which, had we no red pages in history to tell of Jewish martyrdom, would itself be a monument more glorious than any by which the heroism of Rome, or of any other people's triumphs, is remembered. Unlike the Christian martyrology, which, in the language of Gibbon, created a "formidable army of martyrs, whose relics, drawn for the most part from the catacombs of Rome, have replenished so many churches, and whose marvelous achievements have been the subject of so many volumes of Holy Romance," a pyramid could be built of their skeletons who, by the influence and agents of the Church, perished faithful to THE ONE. But, often before and after those darkest of the dark centuries, the Jew, though oppressed, hunted down, and hooted at, had song so sweet, so sad, so heart-stirring, so pleading and touching that, had the enraged world cared to listen to his cadence, he would have been proclaimed the nightingale of that gloomy cycle; but he sang to deaf ears. Mediæval Jewish liturgy, Zunz conclusively proved to be a mine of inexhaustible historic and poetic treasure. In a cursory survey like this we can do no more than skim lightly over the surface of a sea whose deeps more assiduous divers have sounded and explored. It is in the Synagogue where post-Biblical Jewish poetry is to be chiefly looked for, God-worship having ever been the mightiest source and motive of inspiration for Israel's poetical genius. Who was the author of this or that wonder-song is a question often unanswered. It is as if spiritual voices from the impenetrable beyond were hymning to our soul the mystery of mysteries in accents indefinably blissful, not lacking the pathos of pain, an undercurrent of sadness for which it is easy to account. Our "tears and blood," our "blood and tears," are the frequent expressions interwoven with sublime strains addressed to The Almighty Guardian of Israel. "The sacred congregations, who sacrificed themselves for the sanctification of The Lord," are down to this day prayed for in countless synagogues. "May the avenging of thy servants' blood yet in our lifetime become known among the nations."—"We are as sheep destined for slaughter." Such lines, however, are merely incidental, and lose themselves in the triumphant outbursts of

sacred ecstasy, oft breaking forth under extraordinary circumstances, such as the mystic strain of Rabbi Amnon of Mayence, who died a martyr to his faith in the thirteenth century.

Amnon, a favorite of the elector of Mayence, is venomously insinuated against by envious courtiers, who suggest that his readiness to embrace the Christian faith should be made the test of his loyalty to the arbitrary magnate. Thus, being strongly urged to abandon Judaism, Amnon in an unguarded moment promises to consider the matter within three days, but feels bitter remorse the next hour, and fails to report at the expired respite. He is sent for. He confesses his repentance to have held out a hope which could never be realized, and offers to expiate his error by the loss of his tongue. "Not the tongue," says the cruel despot, "the feet which did not bring thee hither shall be cut off." With his limbs severed from his body the victim was soon carried home. Three days later being *Rosh Hashanah*, the unfortunate man begged to be carried to his place of worship, where, stretched on his litter, he prayed with his flock, his intense pains notwithstanding. But before *Kedusha*, when Israel proclaims the Thrice Holy, he in tones of ecstasy cried, "Let us glorify The Lord, for Thou, Eternal, art our King!" and hereupon he recited the famous *וַתְּהִי הַיּוֹם*, a composition on the day of judgment, based on traditional hints, but in its nature as poetically allegorical and awful as any scene in the world's literature treating of the supremest theme. It has since been adopted in our liturgy:—

Now herald we this day's grand holiness ;  
 How awful thrilling, when thus glorified,  
 Thy Sovereign Throne in grace unshaken stands,  
 And Truth with Thee enthroned is seated ;  
 Thou Judge and Advocate, Omniscient Eye,  
 With seal and chronicle and count at hand,  
 Remembering things bygone and forgotten.  
 Before Thee open lies all-records' book  
 Wherein each man his doing seals ; loud  
 The trumpet sounds ; a tremulous whisper fills  
 The skies ; the angels tremble, seized with dread,  
 And thus exclaim : "A day of judgment this  
 When heaven's host shall be arraigned!" for they  
 Before Thy Throne could scarce unguilty stand ;  
 And all of earthly pilgrimage, as flock  
 Before the shepherd, pass before Thine eye.

This allegory is a living reality in the Jewish consciousness, and is but an echo of earlier poets who seldom soar in spheres lower than the highest empyrean. We have given some passages of Solomon Ibn Gabirol's "Royal Crown;" our limited space allows no copious quotations, except to illustrate the nature of mediæval Jewish poetry. A few verses of Ibn Gabirol, Moses Ibn Ezra, and Jehudah Halévy will answer our purpose. The late Emma Lazarus, herself one of our sweetest singers, silenced too early, translates "In the Night" of Moses Ibn Ezra:—

- "Unto the house of peace my spirit yearns,  
 Unto the source of being my soul turns;  
 To where the sacred light of heaven burns,  
 She struggles thitherward by day and night.
- "The splendor of the Lord doth blind her eyes;  
 Up without wings she soareth to the skies,  
 Longing in silence, ever seeks to rise,  
 In dusky evening and in darksome night.
- "To her the wonder of God's works appear;  
 She longs with fervor Him to draw anear;  
 The tidings of His glory doth she hear,  
 From morn to even and from night to night.
- "The heaven of Thy grace did o'er me rest,  
 Yet was Thy worship banished from my breast.  
 Almighty! Thou didst seek me out and test  
 To try and to instruct me in the night.
- "In flesh imprisoned is the son of light,  
 This life is but a bridge when seen aright.  
 Rise in the silent hour and pray with might,  
 Awake and call upon thy God by night.
- "Infatuate, I trifled faith away,  
 In nothingness drained through my manhood's day;  
 Therefore my streaming tears I may not stay—  
 They are my meat and drink by day and night.
- "Hasten to cleanse thyself of sin; arise!  
 Follow truth's path that leads unto the skies:  
 As swift as yesterday existence flies,  
 Brief, even as a watch within the night.
- "Youth's charm hath like a fleeting shadow gone,  
 With eagle's wing the hours of life have flown;  
 Alas! the time when pleasure I have known,  
 I may not now recall by day or night.

"Observe a pious fear, be whole again,  
Hasten to purge thy heart of every stain;  
No more from prayer and penitence refrain,  
But turn unto thy God by day and night.

"He speaks: My child, yea, I will send thee aid;  
Bend thou thy steps to Me; be not afraid!  
No nearer friend than I am hast thou made;  
Patiently wait the day, to which there is no night."

And the same hand rendered these deep words sung by  
Jehudah Halévy. This is truly Jewish poetry; a Divine  
Psalm in a newer garb:—

#### ADMONITION.

"Long in the lap of childhood didst thou sleep,  
Think how thy youth like chaff did disappear,  
Shall life's sweet spring forever last? Look up!  
Old age approaches ominously near.

"O shake thou off the world, e'en as the bird  
Shakes off the midnight dew that clogs his wings;  
Soar upward! Seek deliverance from thy chains  
And from the earthly dross that round thee clings."

Finally this "Meditation on Death," by Ibn Gabirol, so well  
rendered by the womanly genius of Emma Lazarus. Sweet,  
heavenly reconciliation that breathes from every line, so  
pathetic, soft, and melodious, so painful and yet so hopeful!

"Forget thine anguish vexed heart again!  
Why shouldst thou languish with earthly pain?  
The husk shall slumber bedded in clay,  
Silent and sombre, oblivion's prey.

"Why full of terror, compassed with error,  
Trouble thy heart for thy mortal part?  
The soul flies home, the corpse is dumb,  
Of all thou didst have follows naught to the grave;  
Thou fliest thy nest swift as a bird to thy rest.

"Life is a vine-branch, a vintager death;  
He threatens and lowers more near with his breath;  
Then hasten, arise, seek God, O my soul!  
For time quickly flies, though far seems the goal."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> In the ספר העתים for the year 1829, Isaac Samuel Reggio, of Gorizia, reports to have found, among a heap of old MSS., an epic poem by R. Moses Rieti, called ספר ההיכל or the Temple. "On perusing it," says Reggio, "I was astonished to find a work replete with

Deep notes these, even in the borrowed garb of translation. You feel the soul swell, expand, long and soar, ever dissatisfied with her narrow prison below, with things that ever change, wither, and decay. "Rise, my soul, rise higher and higher, to the very feet and Presence of God." Is not this the groundswell of the Hebrew's genius? Fathom, define our poet's dream? You could as well fathom and define the sky's gulfy blue, the mystery of past and future, time and space. What an impartial world admires we are unprepared to underrate. Homeric song, Miltonic verse, Shakespearean scene and monologue bear the indelible stamp of poetic majesty, the seal of supernal inspiration. Andromache, the Eve of Paradise Lost, and the purity of a Cordelia, are pictures in whom earth and heaven, light and shade, Iris and Aurora are masterfully blended. So Dante's Beatrice. With superhuman powers those heroic bards seize the mind, and on imagination's wing carry it from deep to deep, from height to height, from sphere to sphere, with a swiftness and a vividness which are resistless, with a fire that strikes and kindles. Yet, in vain do you look for the soul's comfort, the spirit's food, the heart's balsam, in those vast waves of song. There is much more of the horrible than the delightful, of despair than of hope, in the Greek, English, and Italian epic. There are more horrors in their hells than bliss in their heavens; and we may be pardoned for suspecting that infernal tortures were more of a reality

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poetic beauty and merit. The more I read, the more I was struck with the close resemblance between the author and Dante, not only with respect to the purity and elegance of the language, the profundity of thought and force of expression, but also with respect to his subject, which is identically the same with the *Paradise* of Dante. His style, like that of the last-mentioned great writer, is likewise often obscure, so as to convey a meaning beyond that which meets the eye. The poem is divided into eight books, which, altogether, contain one thousand and twelve stanzas of ten hexameter lines each. The author has added notes illustrating his subject, and containing much curious information respecting the numerous sages and great men he celebrates," &c. The writer of the above lines concludes that Rieti must have flourished at the end of the fourteenth century, and claims the distinction of having made known to his brethren that illustrious poet, whom he surnames the *Hebrew Dante*.



than of a dream to all of them. Homer cannot soar unless assisted by an inferior goddess. Dante is led through darkness to twilight, by an ancient heathen, whence he is lifted higher by the aid of his Beatrice, his earliest love, who died untimely. Milton seeks a muse on Horeb's top, and when he invokes The Spirit, who prefers "before all temples the upright heart and pure," it is for an "adventurous song," an attempt "to soar above the Aonian mount," the olden seat of heathen inspiration. Therefore do we miss the spiritual, mystic glow in non-Jewish poetry. It is different with our prophet and singer, who see God face to face. Non-Jewish poets are intentional, conscious dreamers; you can see them make up their mind to dream, appealing for wings and vision to some intermediary influence, their song being scarcely spontaneous; our poets are born dreamers, unconscious as the singing bird or the harmonious instrument that responds to the master's touch. Non-Jewish poetry speaks to the fancy, often to man's superstition, ignorance, and prejudice. The Hebrew singer speaks to the soul, to humanity, takes hold of heart and mind, strikes every note of joy and woe, every chord of faith and doubt, and, while himself musing, feeling, and dreaming, causes the world to do likewise. Ours is the poetry of all ages, all times, all men; it will never grow old, because, like the ocean, it is deep and mighty, shrinks not with the ages; a gift of God for the comfort of the whole race, responsive to every need of the soul.

To complete this brief sketch of our poet's ideal dream we shall barely touch on its symphonic expressions, which are as unique as the genius of the people who received religion, law, light, song, and music from the immediate hand of God. A harp, tradition says, hung over the head of King David's bed, which at midnight, touched by the gentle west-wind, began to vibrate and emit sweet music, at which the monarch, rising from his sleep, would spend the rest of the night in song and study. No record is extant as to the melodies to which the Davidic instrument gave sound; he, shepherd, warrior, poet, and minstrel, whose touch of the responsive chord had the magic of chasing away the melancholy spirit from Saul's mind. His Divine lyrics, we know, resounded in the Solomonic



Temple, and became thereafter the nation's, as they are at this hour the world's, sweetest hymns; but the melodies are irretrievably gone, an irreparable loss forever to be regretted. Yet has it been reserved for the Teutonic Wagner to discover, to his great chagrin, that there was a "Judenithum in der Musik," a subject he treats with an acrimony worthy of a good orthodox Christian who hates the Jews, because he owed them even something else besides his Christianity. To be sure, there is Judaism in music as there is Judaism in all ideal religion and ethics; but Wagner, who understood the Jew when he needed his help, spat gall at him the moment he could stand on his own feet. We doubt if Homer, had he ever met Abraham or Moses, could have understood them. Can this be said of Israel's modern calumniators, whom Wagner so well typifies? Such venomous abuse, and such low, sordid motives! The world is rich and beautiful, the heavens are grand through their variety. Wagner is full of venom, because in music, as elsewhere, the Jew displays his peculiar dreams. It is well-known that Meyerbeer's first great opera, *Robert le Diable*, eclipsed in thrilling horror and supernatural scenery anything produced on the stage before. *Jephthah's Vow* was Mendelssohn's first composition, and one of his later and best was *Elijah*. Thus even the baptismal water was not enough to christianize Mendelssohn's genius, who betrayed a strong predilection for Biblical subjects, and, like Meyerbeer, personified the supernatural, the indefinable, the mysterious. Wagner's imagination and his great muse turn to superstitions, legends, and folklore, such as *The Flying Dutchman*, *Lohengrin*, *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, &c., for which we are not less grateful than for the ghosts and witches of Shakespeare and Goethe. This is as it should be, and the literature and fine arts of a people are always sure to reflect its religion, fancies, and superstitions. But why that sordid jealousy, that base ingratitude of a genius so divinely graced and so despicably mean? It was Meyerbeer who befriended the exiled, obscure, and poverty-stricken Wagner by introducing him to the public, securing the production of his *Rienzi* and of the *Fliegende Holländer* on the stage of Berlin, and by a munificent liberality

so characteristic of the generous Jew. We are told that a prominent Israelite in Berlin surprised his non-Jewish company by showing them, among a number of beautiful things, Richard Wagner's statue with a laurel crown on head and a hempen halter round its neck. They understood the symbol; it was a crown for Ormuzd, and a halter for Alhiriman.

However, to return to our topic, we gleefully put it on record that any susceptible Jewish ear accustomed to the time-hallowed sacred melodies chanted in the Synagogue, must, on seeing *L'Africaine*, feel himself quite at home, the music bearing too striking a resemblance to escape notice. With Halévy the Jewish element is a leading feature in his best compositions; it is our poet's dream still prevailing wherever, in rhythmical measure or melodious utterance, he is permitted to follow his natural bent, and the world is not poorer on this account. Deep in feeling, high in thought, daring in imagination, intense in nature, Hebrew poetry admits of no substitute; it is Hebrew. Thus does it naturally happen, that even among the mimics, the Jew claims the foreground in ability to interpret what the great have dreamed. In *La Comédie Française*, of Paris, you may see the statue of a Jewess bear the inscription *La Tragédie*; the cast is that of the world-renowned Rachel; and the late Victor Hugo in the presence of a great assembly gratefully kissed the hand of another Jewess, who stands unexcelled as an interpreter of dramatic genius; while Rubenstein's jubilee has just been celebrated by all Russia, the Czar at the head.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A GLANCE AT THE TALMUD.

“WHAT is the most remarkable thing you have seen this morning, my dear boy?” asked a venerable grandfather of his lively favorite of the third generation. “Why, grandpa, I have seen the Italian play his organ, and his monkey dance,” was the reply. “Nothing else of more interest? Just think; what was the most wonderful thing you saw as you opened your eyes?” “Ah, now I know what you mean; the bicycle papa bought me on my birthday,” answered the grandson, looking very knowing. “And did you not see the sun?” asked the hoary-headed man, not without an air of disappointment. “Pshaw, that I can see every day,” retorted the lad with disgust. “So it is, but you never look at him, anyhow.” Is this not the case with the great majority of the big, thoughtless children of Adam? Toys and pop-guns, what else are they living for? “Men are funny people,” is the motto of a comical German paper; but some are too funny for anything. In the freest clime not one out of a hundred is truly free. Habit, prepossession, education, surroundings, home, school, and church, all conspire to enslave freedom, efface individuality. How many are Jews, Christians, or Mohammedans, from pure, deep-felt conviction? The hardest thing is to make a man see against his interest and habitual conceptions. During our residence in Morocco we once suggested to an intelligent, friendly Moor to exchange his flowing garb, light sandals, and soft turban for a European attire. The Moslem was astonished at our unreasonable suggestion, as he termed it, and not unjustly: for, by comparing costumes, he had an easy victory in proving both comfort and dignity to be on his side. We gave it up reluctantly, finding it impossible to uphold the stiff hat, stiff shirt, starched collar, close jacket, and hard, pinching

shoes, in face of the softest, most comfortable, and easy garments a man may wear. Yet, though we were theoretically convinced, we practically preferred discomfort to change. Habit makes error obstinate. As matters stand, but few see this world with their own eyes, unconscious of a slavery that makes unbiased sight next to impossible. Of this the thoughtful son of Israel has daily proof. Defeat sustained through one who makes me better or wiser is victory; but things look dark when Nero is emperor, Epaphroditus his courtier, and Epictetus the courtier's slave. Time is sure to rectify things, but the centuries are long, error supersedes error, one superstition gives way to another, and virtue is no shield where truth has no vote. Judaism stands armed with truth; error may outvote it, it cannot defeat it; "for the portion of The Lord is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." Wonderful are the ways Providence adopts to realize His mysterious ends.

When, centuries before Hillel, the scribes began to interpret the Divine Law in conformity with the pressing needs of the times, nobody thought that those slight beginnings would, after six centuries, culminate in a prodigious literature, which, in vastness of variety, resembles nature in the tropics, while in its historical worth it is inestimable to Judaism, both as a formidable means of defense and aggression. Let no sincere Christian think lightly of the authentic evidence the Talmud—the un mutilated Talmud, which the destructive efforts of the church have not succeeded in annihilating—can bring to bear in throwing light on the true origin and beginnings of his religion. The historian who disdains to call in the genuine testimony concerning Christianity as it is unceremoniously given in the original editions of that enormous work, deprives himself of the only reliable source of information on that subject. We shall elsewhere give more attention to the Messiah, whose "kingdom of peace" turned earth into one vast valley of *Ge-hinnom*. In the following paragraphs we mean to glance at the nature and contents of the Talmuds.

Rabbi Jehudah Hammassi, a descendant of the great Hillel the Ancient, and surnamed *Rabbenu Hakkadosh*, "our sacred

master," was the editor-in-chief of the *Mishna*—itself a vast literature transmitted from generation to generation, which, having received permanent shape in six divisions, became the text-book of the yet vaster ocean of traditional lore which is embraced in the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds. With the decline and disintegration of Israel's temporal kingdom, God and His Law form the central idea and ideal round which the oppressed and scattered tribes rally; physical dissolution gives room to spiritual cohesion; powerful schools, inspired by enthusiastic leaders and thinkers, spring into life, and, transplanted into foreign climes, Judaism, with its Law, Prophecy, and traditional wisdom in hand, engages in that tremendous struggle for spiritual supremacy the end of which the world has yet to see.

Distinguished among the several Jewish sects, whose contentions distracted the peace of crumbling Judea, stood the Pharisees, a formidable phalanx, voicing the sentiments and religious aspirations of the people, and strenuously opposing the letter-worshipping Sadducees and the mystic Essenes by teaching the spirit and not the dead letter of Holy Writ, and, what is less creditable, by introducing into Monotheistic Judaism such of Magian superstitions as they deemed reconcilable with the spirit of the Law, and some mystic hints in prophecy. To them the credit is due of having laid the foundation of the all-embracing and growing labyrinth of Jewish traditions generally summed up under the heading *Talmud*, meaning study, erudition, or interpretation of Mosaism and later Prophecy. It would not be in accordance with the design of this work to enter into an extensive disquisition as to the rise, growth, development, and nature of this unparalleled oral literature, which, originally a living grove of picturesque variety, has, in time, assumed the lifeless features of an ossified banyan-tree, in the shade of which petrified orthodoxy delights to doze. Without hesitation it may be said that Judaism outgrew the importance of the Talmud as a source of religious edification. As a work of historical significance, and as a record of Jewish thought, life, and ethics, it is invaluable. Thus if the Talmud has not the influence over progressive Israel it still commands



over the less enlightened portion of the ancient race, it is, nevertheless, a monument to be contemplated with reverence and wonder; yea, to be searched for hidden treasures more precious and less fabulous than the hoards of the Nibelungen. We have here to deal with a national literature, covering a period of nearly eight centuries, touching any and every topic of human interest, and breathing the dreams and realities of the most devout and inspired people on earth.

As an enlargement of and supplement to the Mishna, the Talmud is called *Gemara*, the complement, and their compilation as one large cyclopædia—for many centuries passing from lip to lip enshrined in a people's heart and memory—was finally deemed necessary in order to preserve and perpetuate the most authentic legal, social, political, and moral events in Israel. That this library shielded the identity of Judaism and was a thorn in the side of the orthodox Christian and Moslem Church is, perhaps, proved by nothing so conclusively as by the incessant efforts of monk and dervish to destroy it. Talmudical records put it beyond doubt that there was no Jesus crucified at the time vulgarly adopted, but that several of that name and of a rather questionable notoriety were, for various crimes, executed centuries before. It is also by Talmudical jurisprudence, so rigid in its methods of criminal procedure, that we are able to discredit the fictitious tale of the crucifixion having been instigated by the Jews, the writer being fortunately one entirely ignorant of the Sanhedric law, the sessions of the grand tribunal, and many indisputable facts, which give the story-teller the lie. The tale, as given by the gospels, that Jesus was arrested by emissaries of the *high priests*, was at night examined by the judges in the house of the high priest Caiaphas; that he admitted himself to be the Messiah and "the Son of God;" that the judges tore their garments on hearing this blasphemy, for which they condemned him to die, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, who had him scourged and, with two other criminals, crucified, is flatly contradicted by the following facts: (1.) There was never more than *one* high priest, who rarely, if ever, had anything to do with the presidency of the Sanhedrin. (2.) Long before the date



spoken of the right to judge criminal cases had been denied the Jews. (3.) No criminal could be condemned in one night or in a private house. (4.) Jewish law allowed no double punishment, scourging and crucifying; nor was crucifying a means of legal execution ever practiced in Israel. (5.) It is a positive Jewish law that no more than *one* criminal should be executed in one day, never two, still less three. (6.) Blasphemy was a capital crime after the blasphemer was warned of its consequences. The claim of Jesus to be "the Son of God" was no blasphemy, and would be no sufficient reason for his condemnation; and the crookedness of this statement is confirmed by a remark of Gibbon, who says that "Chrysostom and Athanasius are obliged to confess that the divinity of Christ is rarely mentioned by himself or his apostles." He calls himself "*the Son of Man.*" Besides this indirect evidence against many an Evangelical error, the Talmud has a way of calling things by their proper name, which made the St. Cyrils thirst for Jewish blood. It managed, however, to survive all persecutions, and, what we thank Providence for is, that there are editions thereof which escaped the ruthless mutilations of the Church. Without the Talmud there would be centuries without any true records.

While the doctors, who prominently figure in this voluminous display of laborious erudition, are mostly concerned with discussing the oral traditions handed down to their age, paying scrupulous attention to such references as involved the conscientious interpretation of the Mosaic Law, secular knowledge, including the results of metaphysical thought and scientific research, are copiously embodied in its heavy tomes. A special predilection therein is noticeable for mathematics and astronomy; geometry being the necessary science, indispensable in legal measurements of land in dispute; and some astronomical knowledge being necessary in settling calendarial questions, such as the date of the new moon, the feasts, the holy days, the change of seasons and of years.

The two great divisions of the Talmud are respectively named the *Halachah* and the *Haggadah*. The first contains a record of important legal cases and decisions; the second is a

collection of historical facts, hyperboles, legends, fables, allegories, enigmas, practical experience, worldly wisdom, ethical sayings and pithy allusions to human nature and its frailties. These latter, together with numerous ingenious suggestions, fancies, nice interpretations of hints and superfluous letters in Scriptures, make up the material of the several works known as the *Midrashim*, which, to this day, are an inexhaustible mine precious to the Jewish preacher. The charm of that peculiar literature is to be accounted for by the contrasts afforded by its hair-splitting *Halachic* finesse, its adroit disentangling of the most knotty complications presented by legal problems, and the *Haggadic* most naïve incredible tales, anecdotes, and all kinds of dreams and poetical flights, which relieve and amuse the mind as the eye skims over the stately pages, exuberant as the tropical forest. While engaged in discussing a point of law, two doctors grow warm, when the one exclaims: "If I be right, let the walls of this school sustain me!" at which, we are assured, the walls reverently inclined. The opposition persisting and rejecting the evidence of the bent walls, the other disputant forcibly appeals to a neighboring well, and it moves to another place to confirm his view. This miraculous manifestation being unheeded, nay, energetically repudiated by a daring opposition, a venerable date-tree is required to sustain the truth of the assertion. The tree responds by leaping to a distance of four hundred paces; but in vain, the opposition is stubborn. "Let then an echo from heaven bear witness that I am right!" says the triumphant doctor. Even this is granted, for a voice audibly rings from above, upholding his interpretation of the Divine Law. Undismayed the opponent yields not. "The *Torah* is not in the heavens, but has long ago been given to us through Moses on Sinai," is the daring reply. Elijah, who often favored the learned with a call and some friendly message or instruction from above, was, on the first occasion, asked what The Almighty did when those supernatural signs in confirmation of the one party were left unheeded. "He smiled," said he, and remarked, "my children have carried it." To the uninitiated this must appear sheer nonsense. A light in Israel—the *gaon* of Wilna—reaches a

different conclusion, seeing in that narrative a profound allegory, and giving it a meaning much more acceptable than many a one forced on heathen mythology.

In another place we are told that a distinguished teacher in Israel, having incurred the displeasure of the government, had to flee for his life, and, like the unfortunate Hannibal, found no peace nor rest until, driven to extreme straits, he sought refuge in a forest, facing want and starvation. In connection with this poor victim of tyranny we are told that at this particular date there was a serious disagreement in heaven between the "Holy One blessed be He" and the blessed Synod of the great dead and learned over whom He presides, concerning a tumor on the human body, which case finds mention in the Mosaic laws of cleanliness. The tumor having broken out under certain conditions The Almighty pronounced the patient as clean; the Synod declared him unclean. Who was to be the umpire in so grave a difference? The fugitive Rabbi bar Nachmani, whose claim was admitted as being an expert specialist on that species of sickness. While breathing his last the dying sage decided in favor of The Holy One, expiring with the sound *tahor*, clean, on his lip, at which a Heavenly Voice exclaimed: "Hail, Rabbi bar Nachmani! for thou art clean, and thy soul left thee clean."<sup>14</sup>

David, it is stated, prayed long that he might be informed as to the day of his death. "Thou wilt die on a Sabbath" was all he was granted; but on what Sabbath? Convinced that the angel of death could not approach him as long as he studied the Divine Law, he spent every Sabbath in uninterrupted study. On his last Sabbath Death was puzzled how to reach the soul of the aged monarch, who was engaged in holy work. The resources of Death, however, are numerous. Sending a mighty storm through the trees of the royal gardens the king, alarmed at the sweep and rustle, proceeded to see what it was, when a step of the staircase gave way; the shock broke his strain of speech and thought for a moment, which was sufficient for Death to accomplish his fatal work.

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<sup>14</sup> Does not this allegory prove Israel's old faith in immortality?

It were unreasonable to look for consistency in a variegated mass of traditional literature wherein hundreds of teachers, at various ages and under constantly changing circumstances, have their legal, moral, practical, ideal, and philosophical views recorded. We need, therefore, not be surprised at the great divergence of views as we find them faithfully recorded, a circumstance which, in the nature of things, may serve as a proof in favor of the general authenticity of Talmudical records. Things are recorded as they were at different times uttered, hence the contradictory opinions one so frequently perceives in perusing different volumes, impressing the reader that he stands before a forum on which a thousand orators, lawyers, poets, dreamers, and philosophers are from various standpoints viewing similar questions. A strong instance of this apparent disagreement of different authorities is furnished by the expressed views about the relation of God and Israel to the idolatrous nations of earth. First, we are plainly told that Moses prayed that the Divine Glory might not shine on any but the Jewish nation.—It is called Sinai—*Sinah*—because hatred descended on it for the Gentiles.—Eclipses are ill-omens for Gentiles.—It is called Moriah because terror, *moreh*, sprung from it for idolators.—The Ethiopians are no men.—Israel's cattle is dearer to the Gentiles than their wives.—Stealing from a Gentile is forbidden; his error is allowed.—The idolator who observes the Sabbath or studies the Law deserves capital punishment.—Make no common cause with a Gentile.—He was exiled because Ethiopians sat at his table.—During war spare not the best of the Gentiles.—You may turn a few leaves and read the very counterpart of these intolerant teachings. Just glance at these truly humane lines.—For the sake of peace it is obligatory to support the non-Jewish with the Jewish poor, attend their sick, and bury their dead with the Jewish.<sup>15</sup>—He who robs a Gentile must return the object stolen; it is worse to defraud a Gentile than to rob a Jew, thus bringing disgrace on Judaism.—The Gentile

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<sup>15</sup> מפרנסין עניי נכרים עם עניי ישראל ומבקרין חולי נכרים עם חולי ישראל וקוברין מתו נכרים עם מתו ישראל.

who studies the Law is as good as the High Priest.—And the “righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come.”<sup>16</sup> This line by itself is a world of philanthropic love of which orthodox Christianity never dreamt, it having a bottomless hell for all dissenters.

Infidels and fault-finding humanitarians, mounted on the windy Pegasus of unmeasured vanity, ask the Jew of the nineteenth century to account for those summary measures of cruelty recorded in the Old Testament, and the misanthropic sentiments here and there expressed in the Talmud. Without calling to help the pressing necessities and environments of those remote times—which fair criticism ought to consider, to say nothing of the self-preserving impulse—in extenuation of severities and utterances which in those works are not the rule, but the exception, we shall say that, with the historical treatment of the Jew by the non-Jew before our eyes, we are struck with wonder, not at the rare absence of kindlier feelings toward an outrageous foe, but at the frequent presence of the most pressing injunctions enforcing kindness and charity toward the stranger, Jew or non-Jew, aye, even toward the brute.

Like the Gentile, woman enjoys a fair share of Talmudical impartiality in the treatment accorded her. Once she is the blessing of the home; she has been the cause of Israel's delivery from Egypt; man should be careful of her honor; man's home means his wife; woman received greater promises from God than man; her beauty enlarges the human soul; she has one sense more than man; her virtue makes her husband rich; the generations are redeemed through virtuous womanhood; he who has no wife is no man; the wifeless knows neither joy, nor any other blessing.—Again the medal is reversed, and woman is spoken of as a vessel full of dirt; as one after whose peace no man should inquire—of the ten bushels of speech given this world she usurped nine; he who is influenced by his wife descends to hell; she dislikes to entertain guests. The best of women indulge in superstition and

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<sup>16</sup> צדיקי אומות העולם יש להם חלק לעולם הבא.



witchcraft. Speak not much to a woman ; she is frivolous ; she should be attracted by the right and repelled with the left hand. As to a bad wife, she is worse than death ; any other evil is preferable to a bad woman ; she is a divine infliction of whom it is meritorious to get rid by divorce. Life is made bitter by a bad wife ; when it is said that the poor man's days are evil, he is meant who has a bad wife.—Personal experience had doubtless much to do with individual views, yet there is no difference of opinion as to the veneration due to the mother in Israel, whose honor is guarded by the Ten Commandments, and who is in fact the all-in-all in the Jewish home, as it will presently be shown. The good wife is more precious than jewels. "He who marries the proper wife, Elijah kisses him, and The Almighty loves him."<sup>17</sup>

An almost infinite variety of beautiful sayings is interspersed among the more serious subjects treated in the Talmud. We take a few of these at random : "To help the poor by loan is preferable to helping them by charity.—The seal of God is *truth*.—Live not in the neighborhood of the ignorant who is overreligious.—Enjoy thy Sabbath like any other day, rather than appeal to charity.—Israel was dispersed among the nations so that he might grow by converts.—The Lord found poverty to be the best endowment for the benefit of Israel.—Having resisted the same temptation twice, you are safe.—The literary man who has not the courage of his views is no wise man.—The righteous need no memorial service, their memory being held green by their good works.—*Three qualities distinguish the children of Israel : modesty, compassion, and humanity*.—It is better that one should throw himself into a fiery furnace than cause his fellow-man to blush publicly.—He who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him to rob.—Blushing is a good sign ; he who blushes, will not easily err ; but he who has no shame proves that his ancestry did not stand at the foot of Sinai.—Work is great, since it honors the worker.—Be careful in treating the youth of the poor, for they are the support of the Law.—No man sins until overcome by insanity.—*Rather*

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<sup>17</sup> הנושא אשה ההוננת לו אליהו נושקו וקב"ה אוהבו וכו'.



*be among the persecuted than among the persecutors.*—The law of the government is the binding law.—*Even of the Gentile no interest should be taken.*—He who causes the good to be done, is better than the doer thereof; he who dispenses charity unknown is greater than our law-giver Moses.—The just are more than ministering angels.—As man measures so is he measured.—Four parties never behold the *Shekinah*—the scoffers, the liars, the flatterers, and the defamers.—The way man chooses to walk he is Providentially led.—This world is related to the hereafter as the eve of Sabbath to the Sabbath; having prepared nothing on Friday, what will you eat on the Sabbath?—Later woes cause the earlier to be forgotten.—Who may check the leaven in the dough?—Open thy lips and let thy words enlighten.—Woe to the generation of whom you are the leader.—If one attempts your life, anticipate him in the deed.—Whatever God does is done for the best.—Nobody can see his own shortcomings.—Pass bread to the poor, so that others may dispense it to thy children.—Bargain not for things, being unpossessed of money.—A divorced man who marries a divorced woman has four minds in his house.—Should that deformity meet you pull him along to the school-house.—Woe to the wicked, woe to his neighbor.—No station can honor a man, it is he who honors his station.—Waste not thy well's water when others need it.—Woman is more anxious to get married than man to marry.—The lion you spoke of turned out a fox.—Woe is me if I speak, woe if I am silent.—Ascribe not thy fault to another.—The learned son of an ignorant parent is like one coin in an empty vessel, it makes a big noise.—Reprimand thyself before reprimanding others.—If you ask too much, you will get nothing.—There is not a man who has not once a happy hour.—It is not the rat but the rat-hole that steals.—The rivalry of the wise increases wisdom.—I have a precious pearl in my hand and thou wouldst have me lose it?—He who has bread for to-day and worries about to-morrow, belongs to those who are small in faith.”

And this yet in favor of womanhood: To be wifeless means to dispense with joy, blessing, kindness, religion, protection, and peace.—He who divorces his wife is unbeloved of God.—

None feels a man's death as much as his wife.—No man without a wife; nor a woman without a husband; nor a family without God.—No sooner does a man marry than his sins are forgiven.—Before taking a wife build a house and plant a vineyard.—God shields the loyal couple, without Whom they are consumed by the fire of contention.—Let not age marry youth, lest the sanctity and peace of home be impaired.—No man should afflict his wife, for God counts her tears.—A curse rests on the family whose father marries for money.—Marry a wife of a humbler rank.—Be careful in honoring thy wife, to whom all thy home's blessings are due.—If thy wife be small bow down to take counsel of her.—Love thy wife as thyself; honor her more than self.—Tears are shed on God's altar for one who abandons the sponse of his youth.—He who survives his helpmate has been present at the destruction of the Temple.—Life has no light for him who buries his wife.—Christianity, it will be shown later, was very slow in assimilating the least of these tender feelings in regard to the sacred dignity of womanhood. Many church luminaries have seen in their mothers the instruments of the devil.

With these few quotations taken from an unbounded garden of ethical flowers we would gladly dismiss the subject, gratified at the panoramic exhibition of a rare province human curiosity has yet to explore. Candor, however, requires us to look at the other side of the picture, and, having displayed the good, the beautiful, and the true, give some samples of the less admirable or desirable. Our traditional literature having been developed on foreign soil, superstitions foreign to Monotheism, fancies repugnant to sound common sense, infiltrated the Jewish mind to a deplorable extent; so that Mosaic silence regarding matters beyond the grave was never fully understood until the exiled Jews had sufficiently freed themselves of strange notions conceived by coming in contact with other creeds; notions such as that of hell and other superstitions, of which our revelation has little to say. We could well dispense with the whole fancy even as a mere allegory. Such allegories are dangerous to the untaught and the thoughtless vulgar. Gladly would we have left the task to Thomas Aquinas to answer the

weighty questions: "Whether the fire that shall purge the world on Doomsday will be like the elemental fire we know? Whether the sun and the moon will darken on the Day of Judgment? Whether all the members of the human body will rise hair and nails on? Whether souls are conducted to heaven or to hell immediately after death? Whether the gulfs of hell are the same as Abraham's bosom?" This reminds one of Lucifer in the "Golden Legend," who, on entering the great school of Salerno, finds the following thesis affixed for debate:—

"Whether angels, in moving from place to place,  
Pass through the intermediate space;  
Whether God Himself is the Author of evil,  
Or whether it is the work of the devil;  
When, where, and wherefore Lucifer fell,  
And whether he now is chained in hell."

We have never ceased to be grateful that the names of our greatest and best are nowhere associated with any infernal tribunal. In defiance to Judaism that leaves Eden's gate open to the "righteous of all nations," Tertullian,<sup>18</sup> a pillar of the orthodox Church, rejoices at the blissful prospect of seeing Christ's tribunal established in hell. "How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult when I behold so many proud monarchs, so many fancied gods, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates who persecuted the name of The Lord, liquefying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars; so many celebrated poets trembling before the tribunal, not of Minos, but of Christ." This orthodox theologian has a good many more things to say on the edifying topic, and, as he is ranked among the saints, we have to accept his authoritative statement that the "prince of peace" has some important mission in the infernal regions. He has to see to it that the "sage philosophers" and the "celebrated poets," like Socrates, Buddha,

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<sup>18</sup> It is a well-known fact, stated by Gibbon, that Cyprian, the head of the Western Church, called Tertullian his *master*.

Zoroaster, Plato, Moses, Homer, Virgil, &c., blush "in red-hot flames." Good business for a meek Messiah. That the inquisitors and all good Christians of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries entertained the same views, that there are at this moment scores of Christian millions who believe in a literal hell and devilish torments, are facts nobody questions. After all the Talmudical fancies of hell are put on record there is the emphatic assertion that "*there is no hell in the world to come, but God will draw forth the sun from his cover—the soul from the body—scorching the wicked and comforting the upright.*" Thus reassured that there is no real hell for the Jew, we are going to give a fair exhibit of our infernal fancies. We gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to the masterly essay by the venerable ex-secretary of the Anglo-Jewish Association, Rev. A. Löwy, whose "Jewish Legends of Hell" enabled us to enlarge our previous notes on the same topic. The expression *fancies*, instead of *legends*, appears to us preferable, the legend having more definite outlines, more of a realistic background than the fancy. An event uncertified by history, but not beyond the limits of the possible, makes up the material of a popular legend. Is hell anything but a creation of a morbid fancy? Does not the Pharisaic statement that all prophecies point to the Messianic era, the hereafter being known to God alone, sustain this view?<sup>19</sup>

There should be no hesitation in admitting what may hardly be denied, and that is, that except such as appeared dangerous to the Monotheistic principle, popular superstition found recognition in the Old Testament. Thus, while exorcism is strictly forbidden, and all witchcraft condemned, the sacrifice offered to 'azazel, the evil spirit of the desert, on the Day of Atonement, as well as the whole sacrificial ceremonial, must be seen in the light of a concession made to an unrefined, unidealized, popular temper, tinged with superstition. Nor have the dim allusions to dark regions and painful conditions in after-life any other origin; and, current as such fancies must have been in the vocabulary of the people, the prophet and the poet found

<sup>19</sup> כל הנביאים כולן לא נתנבאו אלא לימות המשיח אבל ליעה"ב עין לא ראתה אלהים וזולתך.

them handy to allegorize their inspirations. An admixture of non-Jewish mythology is readily perceived in the later cycle of those fabulous fancies which, as was to be expected, did not escape the literal belief of the vulgar. Jacob's lamentation, that he would descend in sorrow to *sheol*, is certainly but an allegorical figure of speech; and so it is as often as, with additional remarks, that term and all its synonyms occur in the Old Testament. Later on circumstances altered cases, and the popular mind was greatly influenced and vice restrained by a caustic enumeration of such vicious or degenerate natures as are fit subjects for the fires and tortures of hell. Such are the uncharitable; the weakling, who yields too much to female influence; the sycophant; the scoffer; he who teaches an unworthy pupil; he who obeys his lower proclivities; the proud and conceited; the impudent; the profane; all sinners, of course, and, we are sorry to add, even the "best of physicians,"<sup>20</sup> and those who neglect the study of the Divine Law. Apostates, like Jeroboam, are doomed forever; but those who visit the sick; observe the Sabbath, including its three meals; the modest and the benevolent and the righteous, never see hell. Hell is entered by three gates; is wrapt in "darkness visible;" is presided over by an almighty power, the "lord of hell," to whom God said: "I am above it and you below;" it has seven names and seven divisions; is located in different directions; by some, beyond the firmament; by others, beneath or within the earth; by others again, beyond the dark mountains, to which frequent reference is made in the Talmud. Mohammed's fearful picture of the Tribunal of the Sepulchre, after Azraël had performed his task of separating the soul from the body, is copied *verbatim et literatim* from Jewish folklore, a few small details excepted. His black angels, Munker and

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<sup>20</sup> טוב שברופאים לגיהנם It is worthy of notice that Rousseau is likewise severe in his flings at that class of professional men. That this prejudice was and is not general among Jews, and is due either to personal disappointment, or to an acquaintance with the practices of quackery, is not alone proved by a Talmudical warning, *not to live in a place that has no physician*, but by the well-known fact that during the Dark Ages, as well as at present, Jews ranked and rank high among the foremost of that scientific profession.



Nakeer, who call on every new grave, unite the soul with the body, and, after some interrogation, either restore body and soul to peace or expose them to horrid torments, applying iron clubs to head and brow, is the slightly modified story of the "*Chibut hakeber*," as the same proceeding is called in our tradition. Dante's vision of the infernal regions, and treatment of the reprobates, is scarcely an improvement on what a venerable Talmudist has seen, accompanied by the accommodating Elijah, to the entrance of hell.

We forbear to enter into details so well known to those who read the Italian, British, and German poets on that unamusing topic. Hell is vast; horrid; deep; full of terrible agents; demons; fiery beasts; devouring elements; black rivers falling on the heads of the tormented: a disgusting picture of a disgusting fable, which multiplied the terrors and agonies of death. "Each of the seven habitations of hell has two thousand houses; in each house there are seven windows, and in each window are two thousand cruses filled with the substance of gall, and in these habitations the delinquents of various conditions serve their sentences of torture. According to another version of this legend," says Mr. Löwy, "there are in each of the seven regions six thousand houses; in each house six thousand windows; in each window six thousand cruses of gall. Regarding the dimensions of each region of hell there are various legends. According to one, each region is one hundred miles in length and fifty miles in breadth. According to another legend hell has a length which would require three hundred years to walk through. The same number of years would be occupied in traveling through its breadth; consequently it would consume twenty-one hundred years to pass from one end to another. Another legend arrives at the following estimate of the extent of hell: 'Egypt has four hundred square parasangs; Ethiopia is sixty times larger than Egypt; the *Garden* is sixty times larger than Ethiopia; Eden is sixty times larger than the Garden, and Gehenna is sixty times larger than Eden. The whole world appears like a lid covering the cauldron of hell.'"

That will do; and one cannot deny respect to a people who,



with such a capacious hell at their disposal, still reserved a place in paradise for the "righteous of all nations."

Closely connected with these fancies are, of course, magic and evil spirits. It is intimated that the evil spirits were all created on Friday. Nobody should enter an uninhabited place or a dilapidated habitation, lest he be hurt by the ubiquitous evil *genii*. The reading of the SHEMANG is recommended as a talisman against those invisible foes. If the eye could see them, nobody could stand the sight of those myriads of evil ones, who are ever surrounding man. It is good not to walk alone at night. On one extraordinary occasion, it is asserted that a hundred and twenty thousand myriads of evil spirits were caused to descend on earth.<sup>21</sup> It is not allowed to salute anybody at night, lest he be an evil one. When the wicked dies, two parties of demons come to meet him. The best of women are witches.<sup>22</sup> If one sleeps alone at night, Lilith, Adam's spiritual wife, will seize him. Rabid dogs, with whom the witches play, are possessed of a demon. Simeon ben Shetach had eighty witches hung.

The doctrine of bodily resurrection has its origin in Pharisaic literature, the Pharisees insisting that the Israelite was bound to believe that doctrine, which they traced back to the Divine Law. We are assured in *Sanhedrin* 92, that the "righteous, whom God will resurrect, will never return to dust again; they will have wings and be able to swim on water." They who doubt the doctrine of resurrection fall into *Gehinnom*. Moses Maimonides and Moses Mendelssohn subscribed to that article of faith, and it is useless to add that their followers in this respect are at this very hour counted by millions. Would to Heaven they had spoken of it as an allegory, but there is no trace of such a conception about the thirteen articles which Maimonides composed and Mendelssohn endorsed. In pleasant contrast to this is the grandly ideal view of the blessed beyond, as it is dimly spoken of in that same traditional literature. The human soul is philosophically compared with the Infinite Spirit. As God fills the

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<sup>21</sup> ירדו ק"ב רבוא כלאכי חבלה. <sup>22</sup> הכשרה שבנשים בעלת כשפים.

whole universe, so is the body full of the soul ; as God sees, Himself unseen, so the soul ; as God sustains the universe, so the soul the body ; as He is pure, so the soul ; as He is hidden in the remotest quarters, so the soul." Agreeably to this view of the soul is the picture of bliss promised in the beyond. The learned, who spend their lives in the study of the Law, are admitted to the celestial Synod presided over by The Almighty. The souls of the righteous dwell under the Throne of Glory,<sup>23</sup> an idea on which Mohammed's paradise is based. The following is an explicit passage on the subject. "In the world to come, there is neither eating nor drinking, nor sensual indulgence, nor any material occupation, nor jealousy, nor hatred, nor competition ; but the just rest, crowns on head, deriving ineffable bliss from the clearest light of Divine Majesty." Evidently sharing this sweetest of human hopes, Ibn Gabirol sings:—

"Who may Thy Wisdom emulate, who didst  
Beneath Thy Majesty's Supremest Throne,  
A blissful station grant the upright soul ;—  
They, spirits pure, thus deathless wrapt in life,  
Reposing from sublunar toil, tasting bliss  
Immortal, ranked, besides, in brilliant files  
Before Divinest Grace in bliss enthroned,  
Their heavenly Manna being wisdom sweet,  
Unfathomed here ; such be the meed of them,  
Whose heritage is life unuttered here."

Let us not turn away from this traditional maze of dreams, fancies, and realities, without a word on the mystical, mythical, and mythological personality of Elijah, who, invested with all the virtues, rights, and powers of the highest angels, often wanders among the mortal race, seeing, unseen. He is the Matatron, the intermediiator between God and man, whose prayers he spreads before his Divine Master, supplementing them with a pleading word. He visits the pious, the sick, and sometimes the virtuous poor, spreading hope, healing, and blessing wherever he moves. His benign presence is even grateful to the canine species, that play, delighted at the sight

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<sup>23</sup> נשמתן של צדיקים גנוזות תחת כסא הכבוד.

of this messenger of good, but howl as often as the angel of death lands on this terrestrial globe. In thousands of Jewish homes, a special cup filled with wine is set apart on the first eve of the Passover for Elijah, who is supposed to fly from house to house, followed by a host of blessed and blessing angels. Finally it is he who is waiting to give the signal when the true Messiah shall descend to found God's everlasting kingdom below, bringing love and peace to all men.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THEIR MESSIAH AND OUR IDEAL.

THERE is something darker and more real in this world than the mythical goddess, Ate, who, according to Homer, now and then walks on the heads of mankind to confuse their sane intellect, and that is the misconception and forced interpretation of an allegory, such as the forever distorted and misunderstood prophecy of the deeply allegorical Isaiah and his prophetic followers. Nothing in the annals of error is psychologically more remarkable than the moral, religious, social, and political revolutions brought about by the illogical, historically unjustified and unconfirmed significance attached to an unproved, unsustained realization of the prophet's Messianic dream; misinterpreted and grossly misapplied by the trinitarian, image-worshipping, orthodox Church. Heathen mythology is beautiful compared with the misconceived Jesus-myth, fearful in its dark consequences; written with the blood and tears of at least as many victims as the man-eating Aztecs sacrificed to their demoniac idols. That Tophet of gore, corruption, vice, and crime! Who ever hated deeper, dealt more cruelly, aye fiendishly, with fellow-men of independent faith and thought than the mediæval, ah! me, and the modern semi-barbarous followers of that legendary Messiah? It is the blackest nightmare history tells of. In questions of truth and error, how little do majorities avail! As if to show that truth is not measured by bulk, a Wise Providence ordained that the world be redeemed by a few enlightened minds, the precious being always rare; and that the wisest, not the vastest, nations determine the course of man's moral development. Even what is at this moment known as the "civilized world" embraces but a small minority of the fourteen hundred millions of men and women on the globe, so that human

progress is hardly endorsed by a vote of the great majority. The masses are deaf. You reason, prove, or disprove in vain. Until a recent date, the question was not, Who speaks truth? but, Who may enforce his argument with the iron rod? It is useless to rehash what men of deep, impartial genius have so often proved. The Jesus begotten by the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin, History knows not, and sound common sense rejects. The Jesus of history is one of many namesakes; his teachings are as contradictory as his record, and as uncertain. The foundation of the Church is legend; her teachings are a patchwork, and whatever there is good and beautiful therein, her actions, her annals belied. Unscrupulous zealotism erased damaging passages from the Talmud, distorted Sacred Writ and historical documents by spurious interpolations, gagged freedom of speech, chained liberty of thought, having no safer prop to uphold a creed whose basis is fiction and miracle. Pray, consider this single fact: Here is a people of a fiery imagination, groaning under Roman oppression, divided by civil war, rushing toward dissolution, anxiously hoping, praying, and waiting for a deliverer—a promised Messiah, and rejecting him whose birth was announced by a detached star, and whose miraculous performances, if partly true, ought to have sufficed to turn even an Antiochus Epiphanes into a Jew. Such an incomprehensible blindness is verily the greatest of all recorded miracles. Why did the “Lion of Judah” disdain his own Messiah?

This is an historical phenomenon non-Jewish historians never critically consider. Why did the Jews not accept Jesus, having shown themselves ready to recognize a Messiah in a mere brave warrior, like Barcocheba—yea, having virtually paid Messianic honors to Cyrus? When a man like Gibbon, in trying to account for the obstinacy of the “Jewish Christians” to see more than a man in Jesus, says that “the miracles of the gospels could not astonish a people who held with intrepid faith the more splendid prodigies of the Mosaic Law,” he says in as many words that the most credulous and deluded of the Jews were not hopelessly deceived. Celsus, a Greek philosopher of no mean quality, in his “True Dis-



course," induces a Jew to advance causes for his rejection of the miraculous birth and the Messiahship of Jesus. According to the information of that Greek chronicler, Mary was not a virgin, but a divorced woman, who fell in love with a Roman soldier, Panthera, and the fruit of this love was Jesus. Owing to poverty the soldier's son emigrated to Egypt, where he had learned many necromantic tricks, by means of which, reappearing in Judea, he tried to sustain his Messianic pretensions. His miracles any Egyptian juggler could perform, and more than such he never brought to light.<sup>24</sup> His divine mission remained thus unsustained. If he were a god he would not have chosen questionable and worthless men as his apostles. His foreknowledge ought to have excluded Judas from his company. His resurrection was an absurd fabrication, or he would have reappeared and justified his nature as a god, instead of standing on record as a rebel. Who had seen him after he had risen? A half-insane woman and two of his followers under the influence of an absurd hallucination.—Celsus had seen Christianity in its infancy, knew the Jews and many of the church fathers, and is thus entitled to some consideration. Enlightened Israel is unprepared to attach weight to slanderous tissues of that kind, but they are noteworthy as the deliberate expressions of men, high-minded and cultured, never speaking

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<sup>24</sup> A quotation somewhere else will show that Strauss had similar misgivings about the veracity and miraculous performances of Jesus. To Renan he is a man "whom his death made divine," and as a critic justly remarked, he reduced him to "an amiable rabbi who, beginning as an innocent enthusiast, developed into something hardly, if at all, removed from conscious imposture." We have yet to hear of a Hebrew sage or prophet who stood open to such disgraceful and yet unrefuted charges as are associated with the origin and growth of Christianity; charges which, instead of being diminished and weakened by the increase of light thrown by scientific research, are, on the contrary, on the increase as the ages advance. In this case it very much looks as if falsehood is a fearful investment that bears interest of interest. Had Mohammed died a poor, obscure Arab the grave would have given him peace. His assumed mission of the "last prophet" doomed him to be periodically exhumed, paraded, examined, arraigned, condemned, executed, and buried, only to be unearthed by some other critic. Such is Nemesis. Truly, there is "no peace for the wicked."

without thinking. The Platonic philosopher evidently looked seriously into the matter, and we are having the benefit of his conclusions. Celsus was not a poet but a thinker, and his "True Discourse" is not intended to fill the place of a romance. Nor was it sufficiently refuted by the church fathers, who often mistook contradiction for refutation.

Glancing at the bare-laid history of the inner primitive Church, Jewish aversion to it assumes the nature of several logical causes. Before the first century of the vulgar era had passed, schism and heresy divided the Church, the Gnostics alone or Gentile Christians being subdivided into more than fifty particular sects, each one boasting of its bishops, martyrs, and apostles, and, what is yet more questionable, of a different history of the career and teachings of Jesus and his twelve disciples, irreconcilable with the contents of the four, in themselves contradictory, gospels endorsed by the Church proper as authentic. When it is added that the Gnostics were the most thoughtful of the primitive Christians, and therefore the least trusted by a church based on ignorance and blind faith, the surprise at Jewish opposition to the whole system will not increase. Concerning the authenticity of the gospels as we have them, Eusebius complains of the philosophical Christians, who "presume to *alter* the Holy Scriptures, to abandon the ancient rule of faith, and to form their opinion according to the subtile precepts of logic." \* \* \* "Their errors are derived from the abuse of the arts and sciences of the infidels, and they corrupt the simplicity of the gospel by the refinement of human reason." Human reason is the thing the good church father piously abhors: a sentiment of which the Vatican is full. It appears that the most enlightened primitive Christian found the gospel to be painfully in need of refinement, and he did his best in this direction. Celsus does, likewise, accuse the Christians of incessant alterations and corrections in the substance of the gospel. Nothing that promised advantage to the pious work appeared forbidden to the church fathers. The difference between policy and principle was not a matter of serious deliberation. "There exists not a people," says the *veracious* Justin Martyr, of the second

century, "whether Greek or Barbarian, or any other race of men by whatsoever appellation or manner they may be distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture, whether they dwell in tents or wander about in covered wagons, among whom prayers are not offered up, in the name of a crucified Jesus, to the Father and Creator of all things." At the end of the nineteenth century, such a statement would provoke a compassionate smile; at the date of its writing it was a deliberate falsehood. The "pious fraud" is an integral part of primitive Christianity, and never was humanity more duped than when it relied on the fulfillment of some ambiguous prophecy of Jesus. When time exploded the stupidity of the impending millennium, after it had been positively predicted by the "Son" of God, lame attempts were made to allegorize the thing, while the scholarly Grotius, with more candor than policy, suggests, that for a "*wise end*" that "pious fraud" was allowed to agitate the world for so many centuries. Who feels not a pity for a religion that endeavors to attain her holy ends by "pious frauds." Blame old Judaism for shunning and denouncing such an ungentle, unfilial, off-shoot?

And that ludicrous jugglery of the primitive Church that was palmed off as miracles! Almost every Christian in the days of father Irenæus was a prophet, open to sudden inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Startling miracles were of daily occurrence; demons were driven out from possessed Christians; the sick were healed, the dead restored to life; foreign languages were acquired by the ignorant in a supernatural manner. Yet when a distinguished Greek assured Theophilus of his readiness to embrace Christianity at the sight of a single individual who had really been raised from the dead, that Bishop of Antioch thought it prudent to decline this fair proposition.

Neither was the moral ideal of the primitive monk of a nature to inspire the Jew with respect for the church. A few words of Gibbon tell the tale: "Disdaining an ignominious flight the virgins of the warm climate of Africa encountered the enemy in the closest engagement: *they permitted priests and deacons to share their bed, and gloried amidst the flames*

of their unsullied purity. *But insulted nature sometimes vindicated her rights*, and this new species of martyrdom served only to introduce *a new scandal into the church.*" Milman puts on record that father "Felicinus had been condemned by a synod of bishops on the charge not only of schism, but of embezzlement of public money, the debauching of virgins, and frequent acts of adultery. His violent menaces extorted his readmission, against which Cyprian protests with much vehemence." This father of righteous indignation calls those "innocent amusements" indulged in by the holy men "irregularities." We should think such irregularities a fair excuse for those blind Jews who did not turn Christians. But father Cyril did not see it in this light. Referring to the fact that the first converts to Christianity were mostly drawn from the scum of the masses, Gibbon thinks it all Providentially designed, obscurity, ignorance, superstition, barbarism, and poverty having, in his judgment, been indispensable to the success of the church. Christianity had to rise from the lowest to the highest. He continues, "We stand in need of such reflections to comfort us for the loss of some illustrious characters, which, in our eyes, might have seemed the most worthy of the heavenly present. The names of Seneca, of the older and the younger Pliny, of Tacitus, of Plutarch, of Galen, of the slave Epictetus, and of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, adorn the age in which they flourished, and exalt the dignity of human nature. They filled with glory their respective stations either in active or contemplative life; their excellent understandings were improved by study; philosophy had purified their minds from prejudices of the popular superstition, and their days were spent in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue. Yet all these sages (it is not less an object of surprise than of concern) overlooked or rejected the perfection of the Christian system."

It is proper for us to notice that, unloved as Israel was of Rome, his faith was not treated with disrespect, but rather with wonder. The same sentiment that caused Alexander the Great to bow before the name of Jehovah engraved on the headgear of the High Priest, induced Augustus to ask that sacrifices be offered up for his prosperity in the Temple

of Zion. Had the Jews been treated with contempt as some Christian historians would have us believe, would the proud Caligula have insisted on having his statue placed in the Jewish sanctuary, *an honor* which all Judea heroically denied? Jewish heroism and sincerity exacted respect of the conqueror, while Christian jugglery and mysticism aroused his suspicion and contempt. The Synagogue was frank, open, and known; the Church was clandestine, mystic, and repugnant.

It is amusing to read the popular Roman view of primitive Christianity as reflected by Eunapius, who ranks the monks among the animals. "The monks are the authors of the new worship, which, in the place of those deities who are conceived by the understanding, have substituted the meanest and most contemptible slaves. The heads, salted and pickled, of those infamous malefactors who, for the multitude of their crimes, have suffered a just and ignominious death," &c., "are the gods which the earth produces in our days." What is of more painful concern to us is this passage in Justin Martyr and Minacius in regard to the dark accusation against the primitive Christians that, in their secret assemblies, "a new-born infant, entirely covered over with flour, was presented, like some mystic symbol of initiation, to the knife of the proselyte, who, unknowingly, inflicted many a secret and mortal wound on the innocent victim of his error; that, as soon as the cruel deed was perpetrated, the sectaries drank up the blood, greedily tore asunder the quivering members, and pledged themselves to eternal secrecy by a mutual consciousness of guilt." Need we look anywhere else for the origin of that spectral *blood-accusation* which for centuries has brought untold woe on the Jewish head? <sup>25</sup> The worship of dead bodies by the church justified,

<sup>25</sup> We are living in the year of grace 1890, and have the grim satisfaction of reading the following lines of Pope Leo XIII., addressed by his secretary of state, Cardinal Rampollo, to the author of "*La mystère du sang chez les Juifs*," an insane rehash of the infernal blood calumny: "His Holiness, the Pope, was highly pleased with the dedication of that book, and he has charged me to thank you and to inform you that he bestows on you his *apostolic blessing*, for he fully agrees with your work about the infamous custom of the Rabbinical Jews."\* It is entirely too late in the

\* The Pope has since officially denied this statement.



in a measure, the pagan's suspicion that there was something wrong about the secret service of the primitive Christian; but what, save madness, can justify the black calumny that Jews were using Christian blood for their unleavened bread when the use of any blood is strictly forbidden by the Divine Law? But this is a question of honesty or villainy.

However, be this as it may, the deeper we look into the question the clearer grows the immense distance, the untraversable chasm, that divides orthodox Christianity from Monotheistic Judaism. For hundreds of years there have been, and there never ceased to be, bitter contentions in the bosom of the Church as to the nature of its founder and his doctrines. The momentous questions involved are nothing less than the incarnation of Jesus, the virginity of his mother, his lineal descent from David, and his relation to his God-Father. The Ebionites and the Nazarenes, who were the original Jewish Christians, derived little profit from their having been bred and taught on the spot, environed by the scenes where the Messiah was said to have opened and ended his career. Theirs was the assertion that Jesus was born, like other sons of the dust, with a mission like that of other prophets, a conception that barred their way to the fold of the then growing larger, and thus growing bolder, but very much heathenized Church. A Jesus born in the ordinary way was not to the taste of the wonder-doing bishops of heathen origin. The difficulty in their way was a gospel in Hebrew, which the Ebionites possessed, and wherein the first two chapters of St. Matthew's

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day to advance a slander which has time and again been refuted and branded as a lie, not alone by Catholic historians like Basnage, learned bishops like Kopp of Fulda and Reinkens of Bonn, but also by two *popes*, who are known to have issued "bulls" against that black falsehood, Pope Innocent IV. and Pope Sixtus V. On reading such an endorsement from such an authority in an age like this it is impossible not to think of the fool who, having tied one end of a rope round his own neck, tied the other end to the spoke of a flying wheel, turning on steam to make it go. What followed need not be stated. There must be some mad dogs about the Vatican, and the sooner they are muzzled the better for his declining "*infallible*" *Holiness*. We thank the Lord Almighty for being Jews, and thank Him equally that at least the half of Christendom are not Catholics.



gospel in Greek,<sup>26</sup> telling of the immaculate conception, had no place. This difficulty was eventually surmounted by the mysterious disappearance of the gospel in Hebrew, so that a translation thereof by some unknown person, made to fit the demands of the new theory, is the only one we possess down to this day. Thus did the supernatural Jesus triumph over all obstacles, and, by a wonderful combination, was enthroned as the only "Son of God." He was, it is true, the son of Joseph and Mary, the lineal descendant of David, but begotten of the Holy Ghost. Joseph, being suspicious of the miraculous conception, was quieted by a divine vision of the Holy Ghost, who frankly claimed the paternity of the infant god. So everything passed off smoothly enough, except the divergence of view as to the manner in which the Ghost had intercourse with Mary, and the way in which Jesus came to life. This turned up a new and very serious problem. Enlightened proselytes of pagan quarters accepted the divinity, but denied the humanity of Jesus, thus rejecting that part of the gospel as false which tells of the immaculate conception. Deeming it a degradation of the Divine Spirit and His "God-Son" to have passed through the body of a woman, they invented a new fiction. Like Adam, Jesus appeared in the shape of perfectly-developed manhood; a purely spiritual figure, endowed with the faculties and powers of a man—visible, but not

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<sup>26</sup> St. Matthew composed the gospel in Hebrew, the church fathers assure us, but later church policy required its disappearance. No less an authority than F. C. Baur finds, on examining and comparing the gospels, that they have been all tampered with by the primitive church, there having been a cycle of traditions before any gospel was known or heard of. Then there was the Hebrew gospel—that of St. Peter, of the Ebionites, of the Egyptians, and of St. Luke; while that of St. Mark he recognizes to be entirely one not of *revelation* but of *adaptation* to the new conditions of the Church. Jewish and Gentile Christians, Baur shows, endeavored to fit their gospels to suit their differences of views, so that the German theologian and philosopher reaches the conclusion that the safest basis of Christianity must not be looked for in the gospels but in the four Pauline epistles. This is, however, more than Strauss would concede, who, in his "Leben Jesu," reduces all the gospel tales to myth, and allows Jesus to evaporate in an "idea of the identity of God and man and the mission of humanity."

tangible. This phantom "Son of God" the Jews crucified—imagined to crucify—so that the whole drama of the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension was, in reality, a comedy played for the benefit of mankind. When it was urged that such a play was unworthy of God and "His Son," the learned Gnostics were not at all at a loss to point to a multitude of other "pious frauds" sanctioned by the *saintly fathers* of the Church, they being justified by the holy ends in view. They would not admit that the god of the Christians had to pass through the mortal process of conception—embryo, growth, birth, and death; and an agreement was finally reached that "the Divinity passed through Mary like a sunbeam through a plate of glass." To strengthen this logical basis of a henceforth impregnable faith it was further compromised that Jesus was something more than a phantom, having been gifted with an impassable, incorruptible body. This wise agreement, however, was anything but final, for the doctrine of Arius, that the "God-Son" was subordinate to his God-Father, was solemnly condemned by the council of Nice, A. C. E. 325, when it was decreed that Jesus was "very god of the very God," begotten, not made, of one substance with his Father.

We humbly ask: Of what substance were the brothers of Jesus made—Jude, Simon, and James? But the thing is entirely too Christian to be understood or fathomed by a Jewish mind. We give it up, satisfied with the matter as it stands; our object being to furnish a few facts, drawn from non-Jewish sources, as to *Why the Jews obstinately persisted, and still do persist, in being Jews*. "Only this, and nothing more." "We shall conclude this chapter," says the author of the "Decline and Fall," "by a melancholy truth which obtrudes itself on the reluctant mind; that even admitting, without hesitation or inquiry, all that history has recorded, or devotion has feigned, on the subject of martyrdom, it must still be acknowledged that the Christians, in the course of their intestine dissensions, have inflicted far greater severities on each other than they had experienced from the hand of the infidels. During the ages of ignorance that followed the subversion of the Roman empire in the West the bishops of the Imperial city extended

their dominion over the laity as well as clergy of the Latin Church. The fabric of superstition which they had erected, and which might long have defied the feeble efforts of reason, was at length assaulted by a crowd of daring fanatics, who, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, assumed the popular character of reformers. The church of Rome defended by violence the empire which she had acquired by fraud; a system of peace and benevolence was soon disgraced by proscriptions, war, massacres, and the institution of the holy office." Knowing all this, and more, why should the Jew be a Christian?

There must be something unsound, unhealthy in a "system of peace and benevolence" which, for almost two millenniums, caused rivers of human blood to flow. Every promise made in the name of Jesus stands unfulfilled.<sup>27</sup> Where is the millennium, the "peace on earth and good-will to men?" Where the love of the enemy? Where the least realization of those extravagant doctrines proclaimed in his name? Let the

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<sup>27</sup> D. F. Strauss, whose "Life of Jesus" left Christianity much in the possession of a "*chateau en Espagne*," pertinently urges that Jesus himself spoke „von der Ankunft des Menschensohnes, d. h., von seiner eigenen messianischen Wiederkunft in einer späteren, obwohl nicht ferneren Zeit, wo er in den Wolken des Himmels, in göttlicher Herrlichkeit, und von Engeln begleitet, erscheinen werde, die Todten zu erwecken, Lebende und Verstorbene zu richten, und sein Reich, das Gottes- und Himmelreich, zu eröffnen.—An dieses Stück der Lehre Jesu in wörtlicher Auffassung hielt sich die ältere Kirche, ja sie ist eigentlich auf diesem Grunde aufgebaut, indem ohne die Erwartung der wahren Wiederkunft Christi gar keine christliche Kirche zu Stande gekommen wäre.“ Strauss does not hesitate to affirm that „hat er es gleichwohl von sich vorhergesagt und selbst erwartet, so ist er für uns ein Schwärmer, wie er, wenn er es ohne eigene Ueberzeugung von sich ausgesagt hätte, ein Prahlender und Betrüger wäre.“ Strauss brings a good deal of sophistical ingenuity to bear on the subject, but he succeeds not in extricating his mythical hero from the contradictions of his own promises; and as Jesus never returned "among the clouds of heaven, in divine glory, and followed by angelic legions, to awaken the dead, judge them and the living, and open the heavenly kingdom," and as this promise is "in fact the ground on which the ancient church was founded, an expectation without which there had never been a church of Christ," so must we not be blamed for holding that the whole fabric is one of fiction.

streams of Jewish blood shed, the hatred of sect by sect, race by race, the division of families, engendered by the merciful, meek Church ; let the gigantic armies, the pitched battles, the new engines of destruction, the steel-stocked arsenals, the steel-clad navies, bear witness to the rule of the "prince of peace." But repetition makes this a threadbare topic. Time has done more than criticism, and the Church has done the most to undermine her own foundation. Her strongholds long thought impregnable have been irreparably damaged and broken into by such as knew her best, and the breach widens as the years advance. At this moment there are more Christian antagonistic sects than articles of faith, beginning with irreconcilable, hard-shell Catholicism and culminating in versatile quasi-Monoththeistic Unitarianism. With these changes in progress and the implied league science made with philosophy against the unsustained pretensions of the orthodox Church, *der ewige Jude* can afford to hold his ground and wait for further developments. Having systematically belied its promises for centuries past, Muscovite and Ottoman diplomacy labors under the disadvantage of general suspicion and distrust. The world has learned the meaning of the Messianic message, translated into sixty generations of hatred, slaughter, tears, and outrage ; it is wiser now than ever before, at least wherever man is allowed to speak freely to his fellows. Christian barbarism, it is true, is still setting monuments to its Chmelnickis, still beatifying its Torquemadas, but Christian humanity is gratefully remembering its Spinozas, Brunos, and Arian heroes. Judaism is proud to call liberal Christianity its legitimate daughter, but disclaims its maternal features in the sullen, misanthropic Church. Thought is free at last ; the birthright of man is being heroically reclaimed. May not this dawn, breaking on the horizon, be taken as a luminous harbinger of the true, ideal Messianic era ? O, that frightful spectre in the shape of a black monk, may its shadows never again darken the sight and poison the sweet milk of human love and kindness !

What is the nature of Israel's Messianic Ideal ? It is important for us to understand the time and the spirit in which Isaiah uttered that famous Messianic prophecy, followed by

many other prophecies, the fulfillment of which the orthodox Christian claims to recognize in the founder and history of the Church. That prophet lived in one of the most stirring periods in Israel's history, and had seen Shalmanezzer overthrow the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and carry them into captivity. But while Samaria, after an heroic resistance of three years, fell, the kingdom of Judah was greatly strengthened by its noble monarch, Hezekiah, a scion of the Davidic dynasty, whose most intimate and loyal adviser was Isaiah, great as statesman and prophetic orator. He it was who predicted the doom of Sennacherib, whose immense host was smitten with the plague under the walls of Zion. It was evident, however, that the small Judean kingdom could not long withstand the overwhelming power of the heathen, unless a redeemer of more than human endowments would rise from the stock of that glorious dynasty, under whose first two rulers Israel had seen his brightest days. For who could forget that the hateful, ever-lurking Philistines, now once more raising their heads in defiance, had been completely defeated by the immortal David? And was not the Solomonic rule the most brilliant, peaceful, and prosperous? Was Solomon not famed as the wisest of kings, whose wisdom legendary tales magnified? Were not the gorgeous temples and pompous palaces there to remind the people of the golden age when Oriental glitter, wealth, and plenty dazzled the multitude? There was no war in the times of Solomon. Hiram, king of Tyre, supplied materials and skillful workmen to build the Temple; the queen of Sheba journeyed to Jerusalem with a caravan laden with jewels and spices, and, having all her riddles solved by her royal host, she admitted that he was far wiser than fame made him. A fleet brought gold and other treasures from remote quarters. It was impossible not to look back with longing on a time so prosperous, peaceful, and glorious. And when the prophetic genius took celestial fire and a noble figure of a spiritual nature was to rise vaguely from the dimness of futurity, it naturally assumed the shape of an idealized Solomon destined to initiate an era yet more prosperous and peaceful than the bygone. Recall to memory the dream of



young Solomon, who, given wealth and wisdom to choose from, prefers "an understanding heart;" think of the decision which frustrates the malice of an envious female, who would have the child of another one cut in twain; then reflect on the gems of ethical and philosophical meditation, which at that time were already current in every Jewish household; and you have the noble, royal picture of the prophet's promised Messiah. "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stem of Jesse, and a sprout shall spring out of his root; and there shall rest upon him the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.—And not after the sight of his eyes shall he judge, and not after the hearing of his ears shall he decide." His qualities are to be righteousness and equity; he will protect the poor and the suffering; he "shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth," and the peace of earth will extend to the animal kingdom, that "shall not hurt nor destroy on all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

His mission is strictly defined: "He will set up an ensign unto the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel; and the dispersed of Judah will he collect together from the four corners of the earth."—"Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not assail Ephraim."—"To him shall nations come to inquire; and his resting place shall be glorious," &c. Here is a translucent, beatified Solomon and his peaceful kingdom poetically painted. *Ephraim* and *Judah* are to be mainly benefited by the Messiah; the scattered gathered "together from the four corners of the earth." And is Jesus, with the dark era he initiated, to be accepted as the archetype of that sublime picture? Absurdity! Say, white is black. Ah, millions of humanity are deluded.

Several remarks in Talmudical lore indicate the same Jewish view on the Messiah and his golden times. If a personal Messiah was really expected by the Jews, would a learned doctor ask: "Whether Cyrus was not Messiah?"<sup>28</sup> Would



another maintain: "There is no Messiah for Israel?"<sup>29</sup> Would a third say: "Jerusalem will be redeemed by righteousness?"<sup>30</sup> Would the prophet Isaiah himself call the pagan Cyrus "the Messiah of the Lord?" The masses are always inclined to take prophecies literally; the wise never. So it is with the allegory of hell, so with that of the Messiah. Great lights in Israel discard the literal meaning of a personal Messiah, substituting therefor a cycle of universal enlightenment and peace. It is not to be a Saturnian age of physical delights and plentiful harvests only, but one spiritualized by the supernal felicity derived from a full knowledge and worship of The Only God. Accustomed to see the prophet's vision realized, the Messianic dream is thenceforth foremost in the Jewish mind, and the darker the times, the deeper the sufferings, the keener the hopes that the Utopian era is at hand. With all this realistic Israel has never for any length of time been deceived by a fraudulent Messiah. Frequently as such impostors came to light they seldom created more than a passing ripple on the serene surface of Jewish realism. There was a critical sanity in the nature of our early sires, which their latest descendants never belied. It is this mental sanity which baffles all snares of the hypocritical conversionist. Unless lured by menial temptation, even the most illiterate Jew would not turn a Christian. Whatever the shortcomings and aberrations of the Jew—and they are neither slight nor few—you will look in vain for him in the "paradise of fools." His dream of the Messianic Utopia has a definite meaning; has, indeed, been defined beyond all doubt. Traditional literature teems with allusions to the *ימות המשיח* "Messianic times," but it is a dream with a tangible reality at the bottom of it. No less an authority than the philosophical Maimonides furnishes the definition of it. He sees in the promised Messiah a heaven-commissioned personality, a prophet sent to teach the world—the Gentile and the Islamite—to worship THE ONE ETERNAL.<sup>31</sup> "They who said that the commandments have been long abrogated and neglected for ages; and such as maintained that they were all allegorical and that the

<sup>29</sup> אין משיח לישראל. <sup>30</sup> אין ירושלים נפרה אלא בצדקה.

<sup>31</sup> המשיח יתכן את העולם כולו לעבור את ה ביחר.

Messiah had come already; no sooner will the Messiah rise flourishing, exalted, and glorious, than they shall all be convinced that they inherited error from their ancestry, and that their parents and prophets deceived them.”<sup>32</sup> Again: “Let not the idea take hold of thee, that in the Messianic times there will be radical changes in the rules of the world, or in the works of creation, but things will be as they are. As to Isaiah’s prophecy of the wolf and lamb, the leopard and kid lying together, it is all metaphor and allegory, signifying that Israel will dwell in peace with the world’s peacebreakers, who act like the wolf and the leopard. Therefore did our sages say, that the difference between these and the Messianic times will be a change in the relations of the nations to their governments. In those days there will be neither famine, nor war, nor envy, nor competition; for nature will produce fruit as plentiful as dust, and mankind will love no other vocation save that of understanding God. Therefore will the wise be great, looking into the mystery of things, and realizing the wisdom of their Creator as far as man may.”<sup>33</sup>

From these passages, as well as from earlier Pharisaic sayings, it follows that centuries of meditative speculation have taught the wisest in Israel to wait for the redemption of mankind by mankind, initiated, peradventure, by some sky-enlightened genius, but always left to work out its own destiny. Greater knowledge of nature’s secrets will cause her to yield abundantly, and abundance will enable man to devote his time to ideal pursuits. Thus will knowledge of God grow and spread as the wave of the sea, knowledge of the Most High being to the Jewish mind synonymous with virtue, love of man, of truth, and of peace; a Utopian vision, an ideal for humanity to attain to. In this particular the *Zohar*, this Bible or gospel of the Kabbalists, is, as in many other vital points, at variance with realistic Judaism, some of its paragraphs distinctly referring to a personal Messiah, who “invokes all the sufferings, pain, and

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<sup>32</sup> מיד הם כלם חורין ויודעין ששקר נחלו אבותיהם ושנבאיהם ואבותיהם  
התעו. <sup>33</sup> ולפיכך יהיו החכמים גדולים ויודעים דברים הסתומים ושינו דעת  
נוראם כפי כח האדם.

afflictions of Israel to come upon him ;” “ who shall in Paradise instruct the babes who died in early infancy.” But these are the fancies of a mystic, to be discussed elsewhere. Our Messianic dream centres not in a person supernaturally endowed, but in the ideal triumph of the divinity in man’s soul, over his animal proclivities. As past achievements in the provinces of the fine arts, the sciences, and in general culture and refinement have back of them no greater miracle than the heroic endeavors of the human genius, so must all salvation in the future spring from the divinest qualities of humanity. Every man must be his own Messiah, and every humane worker is, in a sense, a redeemer. Judaism has long ago rejected the idea that man is an orphaned child, an accidental combination of cosmic dust, hopelessly cast into infinity to be born, live, and die in pain. Nor does it countenance the preposterous notion that man is born depraved. No ; he is born frail, but his very frailty is to be the source of his greatness, for he has freedom to rise from the lowest to the highest. He was not made for the universe, but the universe was made for him ; for his rise, progress, elevation, and spiritualization. The quintessence of the finest elements below ; fire, ether, and spirit from above all converge in the Godlikeness of his soul, centering therein and radiating therefrom to infinite heights. The relation of The Universal Spirit to the human mind is not less evident than the relation of the sun to this globe. Earth and heavens, the stars, the seas, and the continents are all for man’s education. Doubt not the divinity of your soul, the power to take care of self. Had you not the supernal qualities of thought, progress, and free action, you could not control a world which has a thousandfold agents to destroy you ; you could not subdue and utilize the elements ; you could not venture out on the ocean’s treacherous deep ; you could not breathe life-like beauty on canvas ; nor turn rocks into noble monuments of taste and symmetry ; nor work in metal as in clay ; nor bend nature’s obstinate neck under the yoke of your genius ; you could not seriously entertain the dream of immortality ; you would not be the noblest, most potent being under the sun. Man is the result, the crown, the finishing

touch of creation, and embodies in him all the essences which bade the universe be and move.

But man fell, lost Eden, tasted of the fruit of knowledge, lost all hope of self-redemption, and, but for the merciful "vicarious sacrifice," would go down to eternal perdition, says the orthodox Church. Poor salvation policy this, ascribed to a loving, just Creator, who made man frail, allowed the devil to tempt him through his gentle wife, so that he might surely fall, so that he might be condemned, in order that "God's Son" or God Himself might be crucified to redeem him. Blasphemous doctrine! GOD IS ALL-WISE, ALL-MERCIFUL, ALL-KNOWING. He made humanity weak, so that by its own will-power and endeavor it might rise to self-conquered sovereignty. We repeat, it is from man's weakness that his strength and glory spring. Let none think lightly of the race, its past victories, its present greatness, and its future possibilities. Who may tell how far, how high, its longing, daring, restless spirit may yet lift it? Think not, at this moment, of human frailty, but pass in review the cycles bygone; think of him, who, springing from the double mystery of Time and Space, less armed than the brute, with darkness behind and darkness before him, at war with the elements and the beast, succeeded in stamping his seal on the face of a world, and, after a struggle of ages unnumbered, stands, mightier than ever, his foot firmly planted on earth, his eye piercing the gulfs of heaven, armed, like the Grecian chief-god, with thunder and lightning, and meditating war on death himself. Surely, we are a great, God-like species of beings, whom angels may envy, and it lies in our power to turn this planet into an ideal, heavenly kingdom.

Surveying the changes which have of late markedly modified the relation of man to man, we are encouraged to entertain the hope that our Messianic dream is nearing realization. Vast, dreary regions there are where the wolf is still feeding on the lamb, the leopard still devouring the kid; but the growing knowledge of God has, withal, dispersed many a thunder-cloud, laid bare many a barren land to the fertilizing influence of the sunny beam. Is not Spain ashamed of her

past? Is not Rome befriending the martyred race? Sits not a Jew in the House of Lords? Has not another one been installed, and this a third time, as the Lord Mayor of the greatest city on earth? Was not a Jew's free gift among those of the Pope's jubilee? These are blessed signs of the times. May our prophet's sweetest vision be verified. Israel's particularism is not one of exclusiveness, but of spiritual conquest. His Sinaitic *magna charta* once promulgated, he lives true to his pledge, unshaken in his resolve to make Jehovah's banner the ensign of the race. Nor will he rest nor yield until "those who flock toward the Mount Zion shall judge the Mount Esau,"  
 \* \* \* "on which day The Lord will be One and His Name One!"





## CHAPTER VIII.

### OUR MYSTIC VISION.

MYSTICISM means deep thinking and deeper feeling ; it is a conscious admission that human reason reveals not enough of God to the soul to appease her deepest, often indefinable longings. Reason ceases with definition. Who and where is God ? What are His attributes ? What is infinity, eternity, law, matter, spirit, being ? Can reason define them ? If she cannot, she must, and actually does, resort to a power of a finer spiritual insight and penetration, which is known as *intuition* : a power which teaches the heart to feel logically and the mind to think dreamingly. Revelation and Prophecy gave Judaism the advantage of a mystic realism, or, as the moderns call it, a philosophical transcendentalism. Yet was there a period in our history when, dissatisfied with things visible, subject to the worst of social conditions humanity is capable of enduring, the Jewish mind, inexhaustible in varying aspects of the spiritual, evolved a system of mystic dreams which, disowned by sane Jewish philosophy, and decried by many critics as methodized insanity, is yet a phenomenon not unworthy of a fair notice. There is most assuredly method in the madness of the Kabbalist. Nor are his views of Creator and creations entirely original. Besides the *Book of Creation*, or *Sefar Yezirah*, a work assumed to be of hoary antiquity, the main source of this Theosophy is the *Zohar*, a Chaldaic term denoting "splendor," heavenly light, a book of strange revelations, of which Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai is said to have been the author or compiler. The substance of this mystic text-book was long generally accepted by Kabbalists as an oral revelation delivered by God to Adam while in Eden, and thence it passed, from age to age, down to its compilation in its present form. Later critics, however, undertook to disprove its antiquity, and

to trace it to an author of a comparatively recent date, and their efforts were crowned with success, thus divesting the *Zohar* of the sanctimonious halo it not unnaturally assumed.

The *Zohar* has been conclusively proved to be a production of the thirteenth century, with Moses de Leon as its original author; a theory with which we are little concerned, considering that the object of these brief notes is not to establish date and authorship, but to convey an idea of that strangest of the peculiar productions of the Jewish mind. Whosoever the author, he was a Jew, and claims our attention, whether we agree or disagree. We may find fault with the system as one irreconcilable with our Monotheistic ideal, savoring too much of the trinitarian salvation scheme to be congenial to Jewish intuition; subordinating the ethical element to the vaporous, imaginary, philosophically untenable; attempting to pass off a crazy mosaic made up of a little of everything, borrowed everywhere, of everybody, as an original work. Yet, with all deductions and allowances made, the *Zohar* remains a literary curiosity of uncommon interest. Its author commands considerable knowledge of ancient Jewish and non-Jewish philosophy; he has method, and a remarkably cunning faculty of assimilation, while his imagination would, as a poet, have secured for him high distinction. These qualities he wields with consummate ingenuity, blending them into a hazy whole sufficiently coherent and systematic to deceive the novice, but dissolving under the magic test of historical analysis. The author, however, enforces respect for his sincerity. There is dead earnest in every line. Faith is in his work, deep and strong. His universe teems with life and being, visible and invisible, all issuing from the Infinite Incomprehensible. Herein the *Zohar* is essentially Jewish; as for the rest, let us see.

We are confronted here with a maze of thought, fancy, conception, truth, fable, and fiction unknown in the annals of philosophy. The nature of the Divine, Supreme Being, and of all being, the origin and object of all creations, are therein accounted for with a conclusiveness and a boldness which rouse astonishment. Never was metaphysical thought uttered with such a positive precision and definiteness. As in Genesis,

the author disdains to reason, but gives facts with an air of unquestionable authority, and his votaries accept them with unqualified faith, as if not he but they have had the mystic revelation. God, the Origin, Substance, and Author of all things seen or unseen, is here denominated The Unbounded or the *En-Soph*, having neither beginning nor end, nor dimension, nor form, nor attributes, each of which if ascribed to Him, would limit His infinity. The universe—which necessarily has bounds somewhere—is all contained in Him, not He in the universe—which is a Talmudical idea. Being thus incomprehensible to finite intellect, in order to be known, God manifests Himself in what is visible to the eye and comprehensible to the mind. But such manifestations were impossible without certain active or creative principles emanating from The Unbounded or *En-Soph*. For this purpose a perfect spiritual being, a celestial Adam, of whom the earthly one is a gross copy, had to be called into existence. That supernal power, whom Ezekiel saw in vision mounted on a chariot of fire, was thus not God Himself, but a perfect personification of Him, or, to give it the trinitarian name, “His Son.” Milton imparts poetical beauty to this Kabbalistic fancy. That Shadow of God or Adam being the centre of all creative energy or potentiality, is the prompting focus, as it were, from whom ten active Virtues or Emanations, called *Sephiroth*, radiate. These are: Crown, Wisdom, Intelligence, Beauty, Love, Justice, Foundation, Firmness, Splendor, and Kingdom. The Emanations issue from the several members and quarters of the archetypal heavenly Adam, and we have only to imagine a wise, mighty monarch, crown on head, wisdom written on his face, intelligence speaking from his heart, love and justice practiced by his hands, a vigorous progeny issuing from his loins, the splendor and firmness of royal manhood visible in his lordly bearing, powerful limbs, finally, a kingdom at his feet, and we have the mortal picture of immortal, creative royalty. Such is the first perfect reflex of The Unbounded, and such His ten creative virtues. With these the basis for the origination and progression of the visible and invisible universe is laid.

We are sorry to deny originality to this conception, which is scarcely half as philosophical and ideal as the *Divine Sophia* of the Philonic, and the *æons* of the Platonic system, of which it is an inferior reflection. What the *Zohar* claims for the *Sephiroth* the Gnostics many centuries before ascribed to the *æons*, which are in turn an improvement on the Titans, who sprang from Chaos with the charge of building the upper and the nether worlds. The vision of the heavenly Adam is nothing else than the mythical Minerva, who sprang armed from the head of Jupiter. Nor does the resemblance end here. The *En-Soph* looks not unlike Chronos, with incomprehensible Fate in the background. Further comparison suggests the probability—as will appear later—of this mystic Theosophy being a melange of Hellenic and Hebraic ideas as welded by Philo.

The Monotheistic Jew of ethical realities is not readily open to mystic extravagances unless lured by a golden promise of some new spiritual revelation. When the Platonic philosophers made the happy effort of idealizing Greek polytheism, reducing it to an anthropomorphic expression of the infinite *Logos*, Alexandrian Judaism realized an affinity of thought, and the result was that wedding and welding of Hellenic and Hebraic ideas, which became the life-work of Philo Judæus. *Kabbalah*, we venture to maintain, is nothing else than an unfortunate dilution of Philo's transcendental Judaism. Philo's God is naturally a most absolute transcendency, His universe originating in the *Divine Sophia*, or Wisdom. One must be blind not to perceive in these two fundamental principles of Philo's philosophy the metamorphosed ideas of the *En-Soph* and the heavenly Adam with his several *æons* or Emanations. And is not the ethical summary of Kabbalistic self-denial and resignation—the *ביטול היש*—but a mystical reflection of Philo's ethical ideal that culminates in meditation, renunciation, and in an unconditional surrender of self to The Supreme Will? Compatible with Greek mythology of male and female deities, is also the mystic realization of a spiritual, moral, and material world, engendered by a union of male and female *Sephiroth*, as Intelligence and Beauty, Love and Justice, Firm-

ness and Splendor, with the all-embracing, most glorious *Sephira*, *Kingdom*, as the climax and sum of all the other nine Emanations, excelling them all by mirroring the *En-Soph's* Omnipresence and Omnipotence. So much for the originality of the *Zohar's* fundamental ideas.

We concede cheerfully, that, if the ingenious Kabbalist borrowed the bulk of his material, he certainly digested it well, and wove it skillfully into a tissue of his own. He proceeds to teach that the highest, purest, and ideal world is, of course, that of the creative Emanations, closely allied to The Unbounded, who works through His archetypal image; it is, in Plato's language, the "world of ideas," in Philo's, the *Divine Sophia*, or Wisdom, a world most perfect and immutable. From this world of ideas emanates the world of forms, pure, spiritual beings, less perfect than the *Sephiroth*, but, next to these, the highest in the scale, entirely ethereal, personified by the angel *Matatron*, who is the garment of *Shaddai*, The Omnipotent, and the visible manifestation of The Unbounded. *Matatron* is the prince or dominion of the spiritual world, and is a well-known personality to such as have read the frequent allusions to him in the *Haggadic* traditions. From his spiritual domain, *Matatron* controls the spheres and the angels and everything else, as a loyal prime minister ought to do. Other traditions identify Enoch with that princely magnate, who is—we are scarcely surprised—the confidant of God, His minister of the interior and exterior. His trust is indeed not small, for besides planning and superintending the formation of the most supernal beings and things, he has to condescend to attend to a lower grade of occupation, since from his potent spheres issues the somewhat lower "world of formation," a world very, very high above the one we are treading, but considerably lower than the transcendental *Sephiroth*. So far from having anything in common with this massive globe, the "world of formation" is wholly free from gross matter, its denizens being angelic hosts, made of light, divided into ten divisions, corresponding in rank to the original ten Emanations; being invisible, except when commissioned to appear to man. Not one of these but holds a responsible post in the universe,



bearing the name of the region or the element he is intrusted with as minister and sentinel.

And this lower angelic world gave rise to the lowest of worlds, called the "world of action," or of matter, it being a kind of condensation of all the grosser elements of the other three worlds, but still retaining the impression of the ten *Sephiroth*. This is a world of tangible substance, limited by time and space, perceptible to the senses, changeable, corruptible, and thus the abode of malignant spirits. Gross and imperfect as these evil angels are, they are yet divided up into ten ranks, one lower than the other, seven of which are the incarnation of all human vices, and inhabit the "seven infernal halls." Samaël is the prince of these black legions and regions. The seven halls are subdivided into unnumbered places of torture, wherein sinful humanity expiates its sins. Samaël was the tempting snake who caused Eve to disobey God's will, thus bringing about the expulsion of man from Eden. Samaël is not wifeless, for he is married to the *harlot*, a "beast" like his infernal majesty; or, rather, both making up one monstrous brute, and working in constant harmony in disseminating evil. Samaël is a fallen angel, whose prospects could be much darker than they actually are. But we must not anticipate matters. The creature of whom we know most is yet to be heard from, and that is man.

The upper and nether worlds being ready and well peopled, it was found that between the angels and the demons there was a missing link, a being who, standing between the angelic and demoniac opposition, attacked by the latter and shielded by the former party, would bring life and activity into the various camps of the otherwise unemployed good and evil spirits. Thus was man formed after the model of the celestial Adam, a being who is the microcosmic epitome, the acme of everything that is mysterious and wonderful in the universe; the very shape and skin of his body revealing to the seeing eye the stellar figures of the heavens. As the heavenly archetype sprang from the Inscrutable *En-Soph*, or the Universal Impenetrable, so was His copy, the earthly Adam, a gracious, luminous work of that Celestial Author, who, to do Himself



justice, lavished all the ten Emanations in gracing His archetypal, last master-work—man. That man was the crowning work of creation is proved by his being the last work of the sixth day, made to be monarch of everything. He being there, everything above and below was complete; for his form is that of the whole universe, and is shaped after the four letters which, in Hebrew, make up The Holiest Name. Within and without, in shape, form, and feature, to him who can read hidden things man is the wonder of wonders, the mystery of mysteries, as mysterious as the starry empyrean, says the *Zohar*. His soul is a direct offspring of the transcendental ten *Sephiroth*, and is a threefold power constituted of *spirit*, *soul*, and *senses*—נפש, רוח, נשמה—by which last he is linked to this world of gross matter. His spirit emanates from, and is influenced by the *Sephirah*, Crown, thus linking him to the highest world of ideas and ideals, while his ethical qualities emanate from, and are ruled over by, the *Sephira*, Beauty, the ethical being synonymous with the beautiful, which is, to our mind, the best idea of the whole Theosophy. We see here in a new garb the worlds of Ormuzd and of Ahriman, light and darkness, good and evil, at war, with man as the bone of contention, and the Kabbalistic theosophist needed to go no further than the Talmud to get his materials; for the Pharisee, a Monotheist in faith, was in some measure a Magian in superstition.

All human souls pre-exist in the ten *Sephiroth*, and are destined to pass through the earthly ordeal by descending into human frames and dwelling on probation below. Prior to sublunar existence each soul represents the dual, male and female, principle. Both enter this world in two separate forms until, united by marriage, they resume the original relation of one complete soul. The Most Holy One controls these unions according to the merits or demerits of man, the virtuous being granted his original companion, which is denied to the wicked—thus rendering his life miserable. Our curiosity as to the soul's mission below is sufficiently satisfied, but not in a manner to make us forget the teachings of Zoroaster and of Buddha. The soul is sent down with a perfect free

will and an unlimited faculty to develop and enrich the germs of those supernal endowments she received from the *Sephiroth*, lest she be unable to re-ascend to the Primordial Source. Reason is at a loss to realize how a power issuing from the highest Emanations, instead of idealizing the gross, could run serious risk of being abased and engulfed by it. Yet this postulate is not confined to Kabbalistic literature. Should, by low indulgence, the soul degrade her high nature, she is given, by re-birth, three chances to redeem her ethereal quality, after which, failing in her efforts, Eternal Grace strengthens her by an additional soul more callous to earthly temptation, by which assistance she ultimately re-ascends to her aerial abode. The soul's transmigration is thus an essential doctrine in the Kabbalistic Theosophy, a doctrine as repugnant to the spirit of Mosaism as picture-worship. When all souls shall have triumphantly passed through this ordeal, then will the Messiah descend and the everlasting Sabbath begin—an era sinless and blissful, for Satan himself will be restored to his angelic dominion and lustre; all souls will unite with the Universal Soul and dwell in the Holy of Holies of the seven Paradisical halls.

All this, and a good deal more, is traced back as implied in Biblical lore, and we have at this hour tens of thousands of co-religionists to whom these teachings are the celestial manna of life. They are, however, looked on and opposed by the vast majority as deluded dreamers, giving countenance to a system and a Messiah vitally antagonistic to Monotheism. These apprehensions of sober Judaism were fully justified by desertion from its ranks of many prominent Kabbalists, who found the trinitarian Church more congenial to their doctrines than the Monotheistic Synagogue. Such cases, coupled with the several false Messiahs, who periodically rose from the Kabbalistic ranks to disturb the peace in Israel, have put this Theosophy under the ban of Jewish sane thought, to say nothing of the learned Mirandola's thesis, that "no science yields greater proof of the divinity of Christ than magic and the Kabbalah."

It were unjust to dismiss a Theosophy as nebulous as this with an emphatic "Nonsense!" For, on considering the aston-

ishing completeness of the system, the marvelous ingenuity displayed in its construction, the philosophic serenity with which the mystic deeps are laid bare to the dizzy mind, and the influence it has exercised over Judaism and its religious off-shoots, it is not easy to suppress a feeling akin to wonder and admiration. To avail one's self of ready materials in the construction of a new, or seemingly new, ideal to answer the requirements of the times, is not this doing noble service to the cause of humanity? Taking perfect originality as a test of literary merit, would it not be reducing the world's great literatures to a few ancient ideas? It is not in substance, but in form, that truth reveals herself variously to various minds, various ages. Philo was called by his enthusiastic co-religionists the "Attic Moses;" Moses Mendelssohn the "German Plato;" and Hillel could with more propriety be surnamed the "Jewish Socrates."

The history of philosophy shows human thought engaged in a casting and recasting of systems, with, here and there, a new idea imputable less to mental originality than to the natural growth of enlightenment in the empirical sciences. Assimilation, digestion, and reproduction of thought in a more acceptable form, more suitable to the needs of the hour, is not plagiarism.

On close examination it becomes clear that Kabbalistic Theosophy is a hardy effort to reconcile the pantheistic idea that underlies all mysticism, with Jewish Monotheism rooted in the Hebrew's consciousness of a Divine Active Personality, active through a multitude of agents. Such appears the relation of the indefinable *En-Soph* to His perfect attributes, the creative *Sephiroth* or Emanations. Yet is this erratic tendency of the mind by no means compatible with the transparent Monotheistic and ethically realistic ideal of Judaism. The mystic Esenes were not popular with the bulk of Israel; nor did *Kabbalah*, as stated, turn out irresistibly attractive to Jews in general, but, even in its time of fascination, met with as bitter an animadversion on the one hand as it was enthusiastically received and cultivated on the other. To be frank, we should prefer to miss this mystic vegetation in the otherwise weeded

vineyard of the Lord, wherein nothing but the flowers of Sharon, the balm of Gilead, the cedar of the Lebanon, and the trees of knowledge and eternal life are flourishing, watered by the dew of Hermon.

The mystic Church, with her three in one, and one in three, was quick in perceiving her affinity to the vagaries of the *Zohar*, and, for a while, it looked as if Simeon ben Yochai was to be canonized with St. Cyril, who consecrated his memory by the murder of the wise Hypatia, and the extermination of the Alexandrian Jews. Jewish affection for the *Zohar*, we suspect, alone caused the shrewd Church to hesitate in adopting a system which would necessarily create a common ground with a religion she wisely preferred to keep at a distance. This was no mean sacrifice on her part, for no sooner was Jesus recognized in the "heavenly Adam" than some of those reliable eye-witnesses, who saw the house in which Jesus had lived carried by an angel from Bethlehem to a small town in Italy, miraculously brought to light an edition of the *Zohar* in which the mystic Thrice Holy of the prophet was explained as meaning the Holy Father, the holy Son, and the holy Ghost. This trinitarian idea found a plausible support in a passage of that work which speaks of God's creative voice as being constituted of three elements, fire, air, and water, or heat, breath, and humidity. A work given to Adam in Eden with so much in favor of the "Son of God" was a godsend to a Church that began to feel the effects of undermining reformers. Pope Leo X. was delighted with the discovery; but, alas! the Jews, one of whom was proved to have cunningly manufactured the whole thing! If that Moses de Leon had by a popular instigation been crucified, what a precious saint, what a cluster of legends and miracles he would have furnished for the holy Church? Orthodox theology would have a new subject; it might have proved conclusively that it was Jesus himself who came, as he promised he would, that he was again crucified, and, resurrecting as of old, he re-ascended transfigured to his Father. As things turned out, the *Zohar* and its supplements were left to the Jews, and they have it still—a phenomenal work not to be ashamed of, though un-

necessary as a guide on the pathways of faith and righteousness. God, revelation teaches, is everywhere, is seen and felt all around, in the sunbeam, the lightning, in the darkest thunder-storm, and in the gentlest zephyr. We need no mysticism, have scarcely room for it; but, having been enriched by one who felt and thought deeply, strove and labored zealously, let us deal justly with him. His mystic system compares favorably with the best known to us in the Orient's numerous religions. Our Kabbalistic Theosophy impresses one with a sense of a spiritual superiority; since, all its vagaries and superstitions notwithstanding, it virtually hinges on the Monotheistic idea. To the author of the *Zohar* this world is a serious reality; life a period of trial and preparation—a period not to be spent in passive inactivity, but in active resistance to the low and the gross, in self-conquest, self-denial, and in promotion of the best.

In comparing mystic systems and doctrines one ought to distinguish between the religious and the philosophical element. The religious mystic is a deep, responsive nature, who, suspecting or doubting the reality of this world, and conscious of his own imperfections and painful limitations, longs to break through the bounds of mortality, to fathom the origin of self and things around, to determine the relation of the finite to the Infinite Being, and to bring himself into spiritual communion with the Cause of all causes, visible or invisible. The danger of aberration with him lies in his selection of means and methods to reach that great end; bodily self-affliction, passive, physical, and mental torpor being the threatening extremes of Oriental mysticism so generally adopted in the mediæval convent and hermitage. Of such practices the *Zohar* has nothing to say, except fasting and abstinence from gross enjoyments, which the Kabbalist urges as a necessity to subdue the lower passions and weaken the chain that binds humanity to matter. Obeying different promptings, but in search of a similar goal—truth and God—the philosopher, endeavoring to substitute reason for intuition, logic for sentiment, reality for dreaming, climbs the same Jacob's ladder, and, ere long, involuntarily reasons himself out of reason and is a transcendentalist or a



mystic—which is the same. How escape mysticism? The moment you touch the unknown, unsounded, undefined, indefinable, you build a system on the airy foundation of speculative hypothesis—which is but another term for faith, intuitive assumption. The very premises of our arguments and deductions are lost in mysticism. To build on hypothesis is building on a dream; to speak of things, virtues, excellencies, which are beyond the conceivable; to found a philosophic edifice on arbitrary postulates, is it not raising a massive superstructure on a basis made up of articles of faith? Wherein, then, lies the material difference between the fundamental thoughts of Herbert Spencer and those of the mystic Bernard of Clairvaux, or the author of *Theologia Mystica*, the one being as unable to sustain his theory as the other? As long as reason is incompetent to reveal the unknown and solve the unsolved, all thinking men will be in a measure dreamers, or, as they are fashionably called, transcendentalists. As a rule, the religiously inspired and responsive nature will tend irresistibly toward the mystic, the spiritual. The more responsive a race the more mysticism in its religion, poetry, philosophy, and Theosophy. We cannot define mysticism better than—an innate desire in the human soul to see God face to face and have cosmos accounted for and explained. Our most realistic law-giver, who longed to behold the Divine Glory and see His ways, was, in a sense, a mystic. What is then more natural than that a people like Israel, who may be termed the religious oracle of mankind, should, in its Promethean struggle to let earth have all the fire and light of heaven, evolve system after system, poetry, Prophecy, Talmudism, philosophy, Theosophy—all more or less permeated by the mystic spirit of a beautiful, sublime transcendentalism? Because foreign thought and dream are to be discerned in Kabbalistic literature, this is no reason for us to disown it as another aspect of the Hebrew genius, ever eager to plunge into and penetrate the unknown.


Our mystic dream is, therefore, but another soaring effort to satisfy an unappeased spiritual thirst after the highest and holiest. That Theosophy, well understood, will turn out more philosophical than prepossession is willing to admit. As a



supplement to Jewish cosmogony, *Kabbalah* may appear in the light of a spiritual Genesis. We press the question again: Wherein is Spencer's "Cosmos" less mystic than that of the *Zohar*, a few secondary fancies excepted? Spencer conceives of a time in boundless eternity when nebular matter floated about, brooding in darkness and death, a chaos of uncertain, dim masses, pregnant with possibilities of solar systems and all such potential energies as broke forth in life, growth, and progress. Behind these Spencer does not go, evidently recoiling from an effort which overpowers the mind. Of what we are most anxious to know, namely, the spiritual influences back of all that *is*—we are not given as much as a hint, not a glimpse. Denied the fundamental thought, we must be forgiven if we look at the whole as a philosophical romance, marvelously developed; a romance the beginnings of which are lost in mystic darkness. If the Kabbalist is not less mystic in his primordial Cause, he is decidedly less dim, ay, he is positive in its definition. His *En-Soph* is simply the Incomprehensible Eternal; the *Elohim* of Genesis, whose fiats are anthropomorphized. The philosopher assumes first causes, the Kabbalist explains them; the philosopher's forces are blind, directed nobody knows by whom, springing nobody tells whence; the Kabbalist systematically, and, we may add, philosophically, bodies forth a stupendous cosmos, back of which are transcendent spiritual powers emanating from Him, Whom words cannot utter nor mind comprehend; Who is greater than immensity, a Source transcending all thought, all limit, all comprehension; felt, not explained; inexhaustible; the Beginning of all, Himself without beginning.

Glad as we should be to hold our ground with our sacred Scriptures and philosophic literature, consigning mysticism to folklore and poetry, our mystic dream is surely not one to be treated with disrespect, as the creation of a morbid imagination. Given a poetical garb, the Kabbalistic Theosophy would throw all other epic tales into insignificance. It is a wonder-tissue, woven of ethereal woof and warp; light and dark threads interchange therein; chaotic deeps, solar worlds, stars and seraphim, and angels high and low are therein bending

to the Universal Will ; and man is there derived from the Purest Essence with faith, free will, hope, and intellect to brighten up his way to Him who is the All-in-All. Smile not, friend ; you know not more, but less than our mystic dreamer, of visions sweet, of lofty thoughts and sentiments. He has a heavenly dream ; what have you, enlightened as you imagine yourself to be ? Either you, too, have a dream or a soul thirsting for sensual pleasure ; a spirit heavy as lead. And whither tends your faith ? What do you read in the stars, the oceans, and the continents ? What has hope in store for you ? This world, you know well enough, is not yours, and if you cherish no mystic dream of an hereafter, then have you good cause to envy the Jewish mystic, who sees end, purpose, and wisdom in everything ; feels himself at home among the stars, knowing, or believing to know, the Whence, Whither, and Wherefore. Happy he, happy all who have a dream !



## CHAPTER IX.

### HILLEL, PHILO, AND JOSEPHUS.

HISTORY repeats itself in many ways. On reading the masterly reply of Josephus to Apion, and those other defamers of ancient Israel, who, unable to cope with a rival of spiritual superiority, resorted to historical forgeries, one thinks he is reading a chapter of modern anti-Semitism. The curse of falsehood is a fatal lameness which dooms it to halt, struggle, stumble, and sink into infamy, leaving its bearers to dangle in the noose from the gallows they raised for truth and innocence. Haman was bodily hanged by the neck on the gibbet he had built for another; are not scores of similar malefactors morally sustaining the same penalty, hanging forever between hell and heaven, delivered to infamous immortality? Lies will not endure. Falsehood defeats its end by the mad excesses it, happily, cannot escape. Had Apion and his compeers confined themselves to bearable forgeries against a race they either did not know or did not want to know, they might not have aroused the righteous ire of the learned Josephus, who found it an easy work to brand them as liars. Unprovoked, Josephus would have scarcely gone out of his way to discredit Greek history, showing that even Herodotus was more of a fabulist than an historian. The triumph of Josephus is complete. He sees his people's defamers defamed. Apion has the impudence to record that the Jews had the head of an ass made of gold in their Temple, as an object of worship. Antiochus Epiphanes had found it, together with a captive Greek, whom the Jews enticed, fed with fine delicacies for the purpose of delivering him to slaughter, his entrails—a rare treat—to be eaten by them secretly, of course. But for the scathing reply which forgeries of this sort elicited from the Jewish historian, many a precious fact would most probably have

been lost to history and Judaism. Precious to us must be the evidence furnished by Josephus, that Jews and Jewish laws were not unknown to Berossus, Pythagoras, Aristotle, and other historians and thinkers of the earliest times. They not alone knew them, but many respected their laws, and actually adopted some of them. Josephus maintains that "Pythagoras, and Anaxagoras, and Plato, and the Stoic philosophers, who succeeded them, and almost all the rest, are of the same—Jewish—sentiments, and had the same notion of the nature of God;" but they "durst not, these men, disclose those true notions to more than a few." Every Jew knew, however, that "God contains all things, and is a Being every way perfect and happy, self-sufficient and supplying all other beings; the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things. He is manifest in His works and benefits, and more conspicuous than any other being whatsoever; but as to His form and magnitude He is most obscure," &c. Jewish thought being so much older than Greek thought, and Greek philosophers having knowledge thereof, was it not natural for Philo to assume that Greek philosophy was, for its sublimest ideas, largely indebted to Hebraic wisdom? Is it reasonable for us to suppose that the wise of Greece, who traveled to distant climes to inform themselves, would take no notice of a people over whom a Solomon ruled? Before Japheth went to the tent of Shem to get his god, was he not there to get many of his ideas? Aryan jealousy, older than Apion and younger than Renan, hates to let Shem prevail, but denying is one thing and refuting another.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> During the year 1835 a gentleman, S. Hart, found at the British Museum a pamphlet "published at Cambridge, by W. Thurlstone, anno 1739," signed by *Philoglottus* and dedicated to the "Reverend the Rector and Fellows of Lincoln College, in the University of Oxford." The author therein shows that "it is among the ancient Easterns that we must expect to find at least that traditional knowledge, which descended to mankind more pure and extensive than among others." This "is evident from the general resort of the wisest among the ancient sages thither, purely for the improvement of their minds." He then proceeds to show that Pythagoras must have been acquainted with the contemporary prophets: "namely, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other sages

Josephus, himself a priest, speaks of the Five Books of Moses as belonging to the twenty-two known to him to be of hoary antiquity, the only code known to ancient Israel; yet have we learned men—among them Voltaire and Renan—who seriously doubt the existence of a Mosaic personality, while even Manetho goes no further than substituting Osarsiphi for Moses, thus confirming his personality, though denying his Hebrew origin and descent. We may then be forgiven for doubting the existence of Jesus, who in very truth left nothing but legends to tell of his career. It must be mortifying to the Church to see the scattered allusions of Josephus to Jesus and some of his followers rejected as false interpolations; for Eusebius admires that historian and Zosimus declares him a celebrity of his age, honored alike by Jew and Gentile. A confirmation of the well-informed Josephus of the extraordinary

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of the priests and Levites, and generally of the Israelites." Thales, as well as the other Sapi or Wise Men, famous in Greece, have all gotten their wisdom by traveling and biding among the Orient's wisest. "Plato not only traveled over Egypt to this end, but even acknowledged that the Greeks received their most valuable learning, at least in a great measure, from the Phœnicians and Syrians, that is, Hebrews, from whom, *in particular from Moses, he has borrowed so largely*, that Nume-nius, the Pythagorean, did not scruple to style him: *Plato, making Moses speak classically like a Grecian*. From those Easterns the Greeks learned the use of letters by means of Cadmus; and indeed, the etymology of this name, which is plainly derived from the Hebrew קדם, clearly discovers to us the obligations the Greeks are under to the Easterns for the first elements of knowledge; and, more especially perhaps to the Hebrews and Chaldees, so remarkably characterized by the Oracle: *The Chaldees alone have obtained true wisdom, that is, the Hebrews.*" Continuing, the learned writer reminds his readers that Solon was certainly indebted for his best laws to the Easterns, whom he copied; he pays the highest tribute to the Hebrew tongue, which he finds "to be an original and essential language, that borrows of none, but lends to all," a language which even the inveterate enemies of Israel admit "to have a noble emphasis, and a close and beautiful brevity;" and, referring us to universal history, he adds: "Aristotle, we are assured, esteemed an acquaintance with the Hebrew learning so expedient to his disquisitions that he made himself a master of that branch of literature, and was well versed therein." Until this is disproved, Philo's conceit of having but reclaimed a portion of his sires' wisdom from its Hellenic assimilation may well be pardoned.



event would have set all doubts aside, and would have hastened the spread of primitive Christianity, instead of which it was long exposed to Roman scorn and persecution. There is good reason for us to believe that the original edition of Josephus contained not a line in reference to the crucifixion, and this fact having been proved beyond a doubt, the work is as invaluable to historical truth and Judaism as it is obnoxious to its daughter religion. How important that historian's testimony was deemed in the eyes of the early church fathers, is sufficiently demonstrated by their clumsy effort to turn him into a witness of the fundamental fact on which Christianity is based. But the presence of the forgeries is more damaging to the cause they were meant to serve than the absence of any mention whatsoever. They betray a consciousness of weakness and a disposition to adopt unholy means. Josephus and Philo are contemporaries, while Hillel preceded them by several decades. All three lived, strove, thought, and taught at a period when the world is said to have undergone the greatest changes. Why is Josephus silent about the star that wandered, the earthquake, the darkened sun, and the countless miracles recorded by the gospels? Having been on the scene, his silence looks ominous, while his glorification of Judaism proves its undiminished power even over the most learned Jews of that age. The same may be said of Philo, to whom Eusebius ascribes a certain work in which the good father sees the glories of monastic life foreshadowed. To associate Philo Judæus with monasticism is about as skillful a scheme as to derive the trinitarian principle from the Decalogue. But the pious church fathers could perform all kinds of miracles.

Josephus is especially fortunate in comparing the Aryan way of writing history with that followed by the Semitic tribes. He makes out a strong case by showing that in Greece no regular records were kept. Everybody there could be an historian, and the people cared much less for the reliability of the stated fact than for the style in which it was delivered. Accuracy and veracity, the two elements essential to good history, were the least and the last thought of. No, educated to believe ignorant, superstitious priests, and to worship fabulous gods, the

Greek historian, in order to surprise his audience, had to blend the little he knew, or imagined he knew, with a tissue of fiction, things strange and curious. The Roman chronicler followed the same tendency. The veracity of these historians is sorely tested by statements like the following by Dion Cassius. With perfect calm this ardent worshiper of the gods records that the Jews had massacred two hundred and twenty thousand Greeks in Cyrene; two hundred and forty thousand of the same heroic nation in Cyprus; an immense multitude in Egypt, many of whom were cut asunder; their blood was greedily drunk, their flesh devoured, and their entrails used as girdles. Like Apion, Dion Cassius hangs himself by his lying tongue. The Jews revolted, had good cause to revolt against their outrageous oppressors. Had the Roman had an idea of their religious scruples he would have blushed at his own infamy. A people that, a hundred times before, preferred death to unclean food, need not seriously refute such charges of cannibal barbarities. As to the cause of their revolt, we are informed by Josephus that the Jews, scattered among the Greeks in Asia and elsewhere, sent ambassadors to Cæsar Augustus with bitter complaints of outrage, pillage, and abuse, beseeching him to grant them equality and religious liberty; and that their complaints were well substantiated is sustained by the edict issued in their favor.<sup>35</sup> It was not always ill-will or malice, but prejudice against what they termed barbarous peoples, and a desire to surpass others in strange tales, startling facts, which tempted the ancient Aryan to misrepresent his neighbors—a disposition modern history has not outgrown. We have yet to find an historian generous enough to

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<sup>35</sup> It opens: "Cæsar Augustus, high-priest and tribune of the people, ordains thus: Since the nation of the Jews has been found grateful to the Roman people, not only at this time, but in times past, also," &c., he orders, "that the Jews have liberty to make use of their own customs according to the law of their forefathers." These privileges, granted by the Roman emperors, were not repealed before 439, when the Christian emperor, Theodosius II., excluded all Jewish citizens from public offices, "which exclusion subsequently determined their position in the Eastern Roman Empire, as well as in Europe, as that law was embodied in the Justinian code," remarks Doellinger.

do full justice to an adversary. Not so the Jews, who, at the very outset of their history, had appointed historiographers, men of high station, integrity, installed into the holy office of priesthood, pledged to record truth—cost it what may. This, Josephus emphatically asseverates, and he has the sacred records to sustain him. King or queen, or magnate, or popular hero, or High-Priest—Jewish history was never overawed by names or titles, but throws as much light on their shortcomings as on their excellencies. The Jew never trifled with truth; exceptions serving but to confirm the rule. Every biographical sketch in our Biblical chronicles will stand inquiry as to its most probable veracity, so that the unfailing legends which usually gather round distinguished persons never obscure their real individuality.

Ours is a history of facts, men, thoughts, and actions. Neither myth nor miracle throws doubt on our leading figures in history. Good cause has Strauss to question the individuality of Jesus, but who ever dreamt of doubting the personality of Josephus, of Hillel, or of Philo? They are the three who bear witness to Israel's sublime ideal long before the Christian myth found currency among the vulgar masses. The memory of these universally-honored figures should be kept green, since they did, in a great measure, directly determine the course of Jewish, and indirectly influence that of universal history. How much of the wise sayings and teachings ascribed to the founder of Christianity are not found expressed in the pages of Josephus, the wisdom of Hillel, and the philosophy of Philo? May he who has judgment judge. And how infinitely more they taught than the Church ever dreamt of. Referring our reader to a perusal of those paragraphs in Josephus which sum up the principles which governed the ancient Jewish Theocracy, we shall give a little attention to Hillel first, then a look at Philo.

We shall not apologize for expressing our inmost conviction that the mildest features and charitable principles credited to the doubtful Nazarene are substantially borrowed from the beautiful legends and anecdotes that cluster around the name of Hillel, while his unsettled mind and visionary proclivities

are entirely foreign to the serene nature of the Hebrew sage. If there ever lived a man who said those many good and as many queer things as are given to us in his name; if he strove and died loyal to a conviction, he did no more than Socrates and Eleazar did before, and Huss and many others did after him. Life was less precious to him than truth; so it was to the great Greek and the martyred Hebrew, and he is entitled to no more nor less respect than those myriads of noble men and women who lived and died for a conviction, an ideal. We mean to say, that the day on which we shall be convinced that a legitimate son of Joseph and Mary was crucified because of his enthusiastic devotion to our Father in heaven, or because of his efforts to redeem a backsliding age from corruption, we shall bless his name, but curse the impostors who turned him into a dark, vindictive Moloch, whose altars reeked with human gore, and whose priests reveled in the mire of abominable vice.

But, as to his teachings, they are, at best, second-hand productions, with an admixture of preposterous extravagances. We recommend our Hillel as a nobler, sounder specimen of ideal manhood, all originality and self-reliance; a soul centred in a conscious self, recognizing the vanities of earthly life, yet realizing its high goal, and commending it as a happy span of duration, vital to spiritual progress in the universe. Our first acquaintance with Hillel awakens our sympathy for the poor young husband, whose heart is divided between duties to an indigent family and a thirst for knowledge with no means to quench it. Unable to pay the small admission fee to the gatekeeper of the school where the wise meet, he tries, says the tale, to get a hearing of what is taught therein through the upper class-room by climbing up to one of its windows. And so absorbed is he in catching the sounds of the learned, that a slowly-descending snow covers him up, numbing his vital currents. Found in this state, his condition moves charity to assist him. He progresses rapidly until his attainments become a matter of wonder and admiration. Soon the head of a school and chief of a scholarly party, he stamps his followers with the seal of his benignant personality, grows in importance,

authority, and fame; displays at the same time an astonishing determination to remedy evils brought about by a slavish adherence to the letter of the Law, often irreconcilable with changed surroundings and circumstances. Later, president of the Sanhedrin, and the most popular of teachers in Israel, Hillel's active career caused succeeding generations to venerate in him the reformer of his time—a man of whom it may be said that he possessed that magic wand which can change a wilderness into a garden of delight.

Hillel's mild temper is often contrasted with the severe, impatient individuality of the venerable, very conservative head of the opposition. When a heathen approached Shammai, with the request to be converted to Judaism, provided he would teach him its main doctrines while he was standing on one leg, the illustrious master impatiently repelled him. On approaching Hillel with the same proposition, the gentler sage answered: "What is hateful to thyself, do not unto another," is the substance of Judaism, the rest being an amplifying commentary thereof, which he advised the proselyte to study. His patience being once discussed by two men, one staked a large amount in a wager, thinking he could exhaust it. In order to reach his end, he chose the hour on Friday when Hillel was in the habit of bathing for the coming Sabbath, to annoy him. Entering unceremoniously the rabbi's house, he cried, "Where is Hillel, is Hillel here?" The good man immediately appeared, barely wrapped in his light garments, asking, "My son, what is your pleasure?" Though the question put to him was studiously trifling, he answered it and retired, only to be disturbed again and again by the same blatant individual, who was bent on winning his wager. But the intruder was doomed to disappointment. For Hillel not alone satisfied the impudent molester by answering all his silly questions, but invited him to come again should he have any doubt about anything he might be able to remove. "May there not be many like thee in Israel," cried the frustrated party. "Why, my son?" asked the insulted sage. Being informed of the loss the other sustained through his patience, a loss of four hundred *dinars*, he remarked: "It is much better that you should lose double the



amount of what you have lost, than that Hillel should lose his patience."

Many are the anecdotes extant characteristic of Hillel's sweet, benevolent nature. Nobody who turned his face toward Israel's religion was turned away by him, be the conditions ever so strange. Shammai rejected a pagan who offered to embrace Judaism subject to the assured prospect of his becoming its High Priest. Hillel proposed to try, and, by teaching the proselyte the solemn duties and awful responsibilities of that high office, he induced him to abandon the idea. Like Shammai, Hillel divided mankind into three divisions as to character and virtue; the righteous, the averagely good, and the wicked. On the day of judgment, all agreed, the wicked will be sent down to *Gehinnom* for punishment; the good will share in the bliss of the righteous; as to the averagely good, the followers of Shammai thought they would have to pass through hell to heaven, a view rejected by the teachings of Hillel, who thinks The Almighty's Grace would incline the scale of justice in their favor, making the good in their life prevail over the evil. How much diviner this sentiment than those of Jesus, who promises no mercy to such as doubted his divinity, cursing tribes and cities because unable to convince them of his Messiahship. Characteristic of Hillel is the incidental reference found in the Talmud about the manner in which he treated a son of a good family he befriended. In consideration of the better days the poor youth had seen, he was provided with a horse to ride on and a servant to follow him. When, on a certain occasion, no servant was to be found to attend the youth, Hillel himself performed the humble office, "running before the horse," as the records tell, "for three miles," to satisfy the humanest sentiment of a royal hospitality. About two thousand years before, Abraham used to wait longingly before his doors in expectation of strangers, on whom he himself attended with joy. Such were our fathers and teachers, at a period in history when the wild ancestors of the proudest Aryan nations slept in caves and led a cannibal, or, at best, a murderous life. Love for all, and charity to every living creature, is Hillel's real Nirvana; but he is not Buddhistic

in his views of human existence, which, in his judgment, so far from being a period of struggle and pain, is, on the contrary, intended for man's benefit, a sweet blessing to be cheerfully and gratefully enjoyed and beneficially utilized. Take the to-day as it comes, enjoy it, and let Providence take care of the morrow, is Hillel's advice; for surely man is here for his best on probation, master of self, his time, of this world and the world to come. Why be gloomy? Is not cheer a healthier mood? The *Shechinah* flees the melancholy soul.<sup>36</sup>

Hillel's ethical sayings breathe Socratic wisdom, Buddhistic serenity, an unexcelled, universal humanity, and faith unshaken in the final triumph of righteousness. "Love peace, strive for peace, love mankind and enlighten them in the knowledge of God," is one of his. More of his golden rules will be given elsewhere.

Psychologically interesting are the two extremes of an almost feminine benignity, blended with a determined virility, dauntless in carrying the hardest plans into reality. Hillel was daring when innovation was necessary to uphold the cause of justice, so that even the letter of the Law had to yield to the peremptory demands of the times. The Law's spirit, not its letter, was his guide, and the reforms he introduced necessitated nothing less than the falling into abeyance of certain ordinances of Sacred Scripture. Because Scripture tells that a man may redeem his property on a certain day, shall he forfeit it on account of his creditor's cunning, who evaded him on that very day? No, this cannot be the spirit of the Divine Law. The man having complied with certain rules shall get his property whether his creditor be present or absent. Wise interpretation of The Law under radically changed circumstances, was vital to the existence of Judaism, and for such he amply provided, by teaching a sevenfold manner—*seven Middoth*—in which Holy Writ may, by the use of reason, be made to cover all possible emergencies. Not less important to the growth and prosperity of Judaism in dispersion proved his systematization of the unwieldy maze of traditional lore, reducing it to six regular divisions, or *Sedarim*. Nineteen centuries have not diminished

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<sup>36</sup> אין השכינה שורה לא כתרך עצבות וכו'.

the veneration for a man, who, had he not died a Jew, would have been beatified by the Church, either as the sky-directed master of Jesus, or as the very incarnation of divine benignity ; so wise, so mild, so firm, sweet, charitable, deep, devout, resigned, cheerful, faithful, and hopeful ; one of the rarest figures in history. Such is our Hillel. Judaism, however, worships nor saints nor martyrs, but looks on all its expounders as inspired instruments of The Most High. Hillel fulfilled his mission ; came when he was needed ; did what was best. He lives enshrined in the grateful Jewish heart, and admired by posterity at large. His precious seed is there multiplying and bearing fruit far beyond the limited field it was scattered in. The lame attempt to pluck laurels from his immortal crown, to ingraft them on the inferior head of a mythical man-god, will in time turn out as successful as the trip of Phaeton on the chariot of his father, the all-seeing sun-god.

Inspired by the same spirit, working for the same ideal, but moving on different lines and aiming at loftier aspects, Philo commands our unqualified veneration as another luminous pillar, guiding, as the ancient pillar of light, his co-religionists from the bondage of letter-worship to the realms of thought and dream. By far the most prominent of the Alexandrian school, and unfamiliar with the Rabbinical interpretation of Scripture, he, imbued with Hellenic culture, found it impossible to see in the Old Testament simply a range of ordinary ideas destined to regulate the physical conditions of life. True, the allegorical method of reading the Bible was not unknown to the Talmudist, but with the Hellenic Israelite it became a rule essential to his reverence of Jewish Scripture. There was no mean for him. To him the Old Testament was either a revelation of spiritual allegories in a literal garb, or it was a system of polity which had served its time. If a childish mythology could give rise to a Platonic philosophy and Theosophy, what treasures of mystic wisdom were not to be conjured up from the deeps of the Mosaic Revelation, and the sublime visions of Prophecy ? Applying his philosophical genius to a deeper insight into the Pentateuch, Philo was amazed to discern all Greek wisdom in and between the lines of Mosaism, so that the conception of

Moses as the truest and only inspired oracle of The True and Only God, became the fixed idea of Philo and his school. For the uninitiated, Scripture contained simple instruction; to the thinking it revealed the spiritual universe. Even the stories had an allegorical meaning to the enlightened. Jacob's love for Rachel signified love of chastity, purity; Adam symbolized the sensuous side of human nature; Leah was unadmired virtue; Rebecca was an emblem of patience; and so on.

We shall have a few words to say of our "philosophical realities," but as a prelude it will be interesting to devote a limited space to an outline of Philo's philosophical system. The shortest review of this philosopher's dreams will sufficiently indicate how much the *Zohar* is indebted to his world of ideas and ideals. As a thinker of the highest grade, Philo deserves our most serious study, since his masterly discernment not alone welds Hellenism and Hebraism into one magnificent system, but elevates Monotheism to an ideal sublimity beyond which it is impossible to rise. In Philo's philosophy the impartial student will find Hellenic thought play an auxiliary, rather subordinate part. Aryan jealousy did its utmost to deny Philo the authorship of a new system. He only copied his Greek masters, those critics say; assimilated materials to reproduce them in a Judaized habiliment. We admit cheerfully that in no case we know of is the Jewish assimilative faculty so surprisingly illustrated as in Philo's genius of spiritualizing heathenish ideas by a process of an intuitive superiority, which never for a moment betrays him as the true, loyal Monotheist. We may possibly hear, one of these days, that an Aryan archæologist unearthed *positive proofs* that Mosaism was made up of materials borrowed from a score of ancient codes. This would be as serious a charge as the one advanced against a great architect, that the splendid structure he designed was built of stones cut from various quarries. It is, we should think, the privilege of genius to inherit and utilize the mental achievements of the past, provided they are, in a masterly way, adapted to higher needs of the present and the future. Had some kind antiquarian removed all doubt as to ancient Hellenism having been probably enriched by its senior, He-

braism, we would not hesitate in avowing what Philo himself did, namely, our veneration of the Greek masters. Would this detract aught from the greatness of our noble philosopher? Platonic and Pythagorean thought, everybody will admit, had to undergo a very substantial smelting process before it could be fused and moulded into the Hebraic ideal; their world of ideas had to be harmonized with, and subordinated to, the Jewish world of spirit. On one essential point, Philo's mind is irrevocably settled. Whatever good, true, and beautiful he found in Hellenic literature, he only admired and assimilated because he saw it endorsed or anticipated by the supremely Divine Law of Moses—a circumstance which by no means affected his profoundest respect for heathen thought. Nor had he the least doubt as to who borrowed of whom. Moses lived at least a thousand years before Plato. How, out of materials that are in nature either pantheistic, materialistic, or agnostic, Philo succeeded in building up a philosophy which is substantially Jewish, is a subject worthy of a longer notice than the one we are permitted to indulge in. When one remembers the bitter resistance the Jews, under the Asmoneans, offered to Hellenistic culture, as it was forced on them, Philo's acceptance of Greek philosophy and its assimilation in his system is the more to be wondered at. But this happened in a different age and clime, and under changed conditions. When tyranny resorted to terrorism to exterminate a faith rooted in the Jewish heart, Hellenism was odious to the Jew, who swore dire vengeance, and wreaked it in the blood of the foe. But when, far from Zion, Hellene and Hebrew learned to fraternize in the mild atmosphere of Alexandrian rule, the discovery of an intellectual kinship proved a resistless fascination to the responsive Jewish quality—a faculty that was often the cause of many a Jewish aberration dearly paid for. This cannot justly be insinuated against our Philo, who, with all his love for Hellenic culture, was to the very core an enthusiastic Jew—a distinction he placed above every other.

The great distance between our thinker and those of Hellas, whom he courted and utilized, is his absolute postulate, that GOD IS THE BEING whom human intellect can neither fathom



in quality nor in quantity, nor in time, nor in space, HE being indefinable, eternal, immutable, the simplest of the simple, the greatest of the great, freer than the freest, better than the best, more perfect than perfection. In fact, Philo's vocabulary, pure and classical as it is, appears to forsake him the moment he attempts to express his conception of Deity and His inexpressible attributes.<sup>37</sup> To know the God of Moses and His Will is to him the highest wisdom, and this no works body forth in such a perfection as the Mosaic Books, which but few ever read as he did, seeing therein revelations of hitherto undreamt of mysteries; reflected, it is true, in the ideal musings of non-Jewish minds, but nowhere found as absolutely perfect as in the work of God's only inspired oracle, Moses. Twelve centuries later the hazy Kabbalist does in a less luminous way throw similar streaks of light on his dim horizon. Philo's idea of God is so high that he thinks it absolutely impossible for human thought and speech to express *what He is*, but that the utmost we may do is to say *what He is not*, for definition cannot define what the mind cannot conceive. Now, considering that man finds it next to impossible to clearly define the universe, how could he define or comprehend God, who, as the Talmud teaches, contains the universe in Him, but is not fully contained therein?—Mark the origin of the *Zohar's En-Soph*.—The problem that here faces our transcendental philosopher is: How God, being absolutely indescribable, devoid of all quantity and quality, could create worlds and things describable and definable; how things gross and transitory could spring from Him, the Most Perfect? This chasm between God the absolutely transcendental and His creations and creatures grading down from the highest to the lowest and most imperfect, is philosophically bridged over by the assumption of *Divine ideas*—which Fichte adopts—and *forces* which, wholly distinct from the perfect personality of God, serve as connecting links between Him and the less perfect wonderfully graded universe. These Philonic active ideas or forces are the *Sephiroth* of the

<sup>37</sup> The four Aristotelian principles, *matter, form, efficient cause, and end*, together with that potentiality the "father of logic" illustrates by the germ in which all the parts of the tree are contained, are, it will be realized, no approximation to Philo's transcendental God.

Kabbalist, who, we need not say, scarcely improved upon or brightened up matters. Like the *Sephiroth*, Philo's Divine ideas or forces are the names of Divine primordial thoughts, which preceded all creation of the visible, translating themselves into the material universe, acting, in a word, as agents or ministers of The Most High, which is another substantial difference between Hebrew and Hellenic thought. For Greek philosophy fails to establish a positive connection between what it denominates the *Logos*, the ideas emanating therefrom, and the things which are the visible forms of those ideas. The angels Philo refers to are the Divine ideas as executive messengers, which is in itself nothing original with him, it being a Talmudic idea, that daily ministering angels spring into existence from the mysterious river *Dinor*, and, having performed their assigned tasks, vanish again. In Greek philosophy the *Logos* is the supreme thought, or Reason, the origin of all other reason, which last Aristotle assumes to have individual existence on earth before it inhabits the human body. With Philo, the *Logos* is the Reason, the Wisdom of The Supreme, giving rise to all other operative intelligence. Herein, again, Philo rises *toto cœlo* over his Greek models of thought.

The cause, as well as the ultimate object of this material divergence from thinkers he reveres, is Philo's endeavor to harmonize the noblest results of Hellenic civilization with the sublimest ideal of Hebraic Theosophy. Thus, with the inexpressible Infinite at the basis of all things, his *Logos* or Reason as the source of all thought and a multitude of subordinate ideas or forces which emanate from that Supernal Reason, Philo proceeds to show how Jewish cosmogony sustains his philosophy, and how our Genesis is the only one philosophically compatible with the most spiritual of Theosophies. Philo is a hard nut for the trinitarian Church to crack, and from whatever standpoint we look at him he is decidedly a nobler and more consistent figure than Spinoza, who is all the time pantheistic, often belligerent, aye vindictive, and, at times, painfully insincere and unjust.<sup>38</sup> Philo is a

<sup>38</sup> Spinoza's flattering allusions to Jesus have no cleaner motive than his vindictive utterances against the Jews, whose fanatic rage against him he would have honored himself by treating as a philosopher.

serene, peaceful, yet firm, nature; deep and loyal, ready to recognize the best wherever he meets it, and utilizing it for the highest ends; a dreamer *par excellence*, an enthusiastic philosopher, loving Judaism the more because to him it is the inspired oracle of humanity he loves not less, eager to persuade mankind that Israel's God was and ever will be the Father of all men. How he labors to teach the Jews what is best in Hellenic culture, and to persuade the Greeks that Israel's God is better and greater than what they deem the best and the greatest. To read Scripture with Philo's eye, is it not reading the heavens with the soul of Copernicus, Newton, and Herschel? Genius is both the light in which we are taught to study and the sight with which we are endowed to see things. Like sweet maidenhood, truth and nature reveal not their charms to him who would not woo. Thinking is courting truth. Look at the ocean; is it no more than a vast expanse of water? Why is the poet's soul thrilled at its sight? Plato thinks that there is a "divine madness" of which the philosopher alone is possessed. His mind has wings, leading him into the sanctuary of truth, revealing to him what is hidden from the vulgar. The sight of beauty and grandeur enkindles his thought, which in turn renders a glimpse at wisdom unrobed possible, and wisdom is lovely beyond expression. But how many have sight? The stars are there, symbols written with the finger of God, but unmeaning to the uninspired soul. Multitudinous nature is there, mirroring heavens all around, a world of emblems one of thousands stops to decipher. Our Scriptures are there—of late the arena of learned gladiators, brandishing their weapons of lead in face of Zodiac's mystic figures. Give eyes to the blind-born? You may as well teach harmony to the deaf. The instrument is there in which symphony slumbers. The untutored touch brings forth dissonance; the master's stroke conjures ravishing notes. The harmony must be in the soul or it is nowhere. This age is out of harmony with self, with nature, and with God. Letter-worship, and ether-worship, and fancy-worship, and mammon-worship, and vanity-worship, and idol-worship, and no worship characterize a time when anybody and anything are more than everybody and everything

to self, so self-sufficient, so all-knowing and all-seeing, that they do not see the forest for its multitude of trees; an age that knows not how little it knows. Philo had eyes and heart to see and feel, and his power consisted in his profound reverence for an inspired work, the like of which the world has never produced; his threefold strength was made up of faith, reverence, and thought; a type of man frequent in Israel. Philo believes, reveres, and thinks, free from any other dream save the one which, in priest, prophet, and sage, matures into an unshaken conviction—One God, one universe, one mankind, one people of Israel, whose one and only mission is to make Jehovah The God of all.

It should be noted that Philo's *Logos*, as a creative influence, is a power entirely distinct from God, and is not to be confounded with the "demiurge" of the Gnostics. Philo's "Divine Sophia" is a philosophic translation of that primordial formative Wisdom so explicitly discussed in the contemplative Books of the Old Testament, such as Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, and Wisdom. Wisdom speaks of self, "The Lord created me as the beginning of His way, the first of His works from the commencement." Again, "Before the mountains were yet founded, before the hills, was I brought forth." Job speaks of Wisdom as the mysterious power whose way God alone sees. In a moment of intense spiritual longing, Moses pathetically prays, "Let me, I pray Thee, behold Thy Glory," and "Let me, I pray Thee, behold Thy ways." The answer is "Thou canst not see My face, for no man can see Me and live." A glimpse at the "back parts" is all that is granted. There is a depth of thought and of symbol in these few words which must inspire the highest mind with awe and wonder. Moses is not denied the sight of Wisdom, the reflection of Divine Glory, but the fullness thereof he never can see while alive; a clear hint therein of what is reserved for man after death. This leading thought underlies Philo's philosophy. In the act of creation, it is not God Himself who directly works, but His *Logos*, Reason, or His Word, or His Wisdom is the intermediary divine power, acting through a multitude of ideal agencies, ideas, forces, angels, and demons.

You may discern herein the heavenly Adam of the Kabbalist, with all his Emanations and creations. Neither does our philosopher, in his speculations and first conclusions as to man's origin and nature, lose sight of the Scriptural text. There is the highest and the lowest wedded in human nature, implying a constant struggle within. Space is full of pure souls, the Breath of God, and those nearest earth are eager to enter mortal bodies, following in this an immutable law. The two-fold nature of man explains at once the goal and the trials of life, the one drawing him skyward, the other earthward, thus making his rise or fall a matter of free will. "See, I have set before you to-day life and the good, death and the evil," is in substance the groundsill of all moral philosophy, translated by Plato into the good and the bad steed, which carry the chariot of the winged soul. To overcome the sensuous and perfect the spiritual side of man's nature is necessarily the leading idea of Philo's, or Jewish ethics. By ethical elevation, by the triumph over the allurements and sensual indulgences of this material, tempting world, man is to reascend to THE ORIGINAL SOURCE of his higher being, WHO IS GOD.<sup>39</sup> Aye, virtue, in her ideal actualization, enables man, even while imprisoned in his mortal frame, to enjoy the blissful consciousness of a close affinity with his Creator. Yet temptation and earthly chains are stronger than man's will power; wherefore, in his ethical and religious endeavors, he must needs appeal for help from on High. A life triumphantly closed in the exercise of virtue and the acquisition of wisdom entitles the soul to an immediate return to The Universal Spirit. In this case, the dying hour is the happiest of life's career. The dust returns to the dust whence it came, and the soul returns to God, where she belongs. Failing in her mission below, she

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<sup>39</sup> This idea is beautifully stated in Midrashic lore, where it is said, that God will disport with the righteous in Paradise, who, on seeing Him, will be startled, when, full of grace, He will quiet them with the assurance that He is as one of them.

עתיד הקב"ה לטייל עם הצדיקים בנן ערן לעתיד לבא וצדיקים רואים אותו ומדועזעים מלפניו והקב"ה אומר להם לצדיקים מה לכם מדועזעים מלפניי הריני כיוצא בכם יכול לא יהיה מוראי עליכם.



has to continue her period of probation by passing from one body to another, until, purified, she may return to her original empyrean home. This is evidently a concession made to the Pythagorean doctrine, borrowed from Egypt and India, of the soul's transmigration, and known in Kabbalistic terminology as the *gilgul*.

It is not a small matter for us to be able to point to such a mighty mind, who antedates Christianity and its founder, and anticipates all its highest claims, including the doctrine of eternal life. Josephus, Hillel, and Philo are three gigantic figures who, in various ways, bear witness to Hebraic idealism, circumscribing and sounding that ocean of spiritual vastness which Judaism embraces and fathoms, and whence flow the less limpid and shallow rivers of its daughter creeds. Whatever is healthy and pure in their tides comes from that unpolluted crystal deep, fed by unbounded spiritual streams, converging in the Living, All-Enfolding, and Upholding, Creating, and Sustaining Fountain-Head; the turbid, unclean, obnoxious, and venomous therein is drawn from heathen sewers. Aryan cosmogonies, Aryan gods, ethics, theosophies, and philosophies are all on record; so is Israel's life and thought, his heart and his soul, his history and his God there, unaffected, aye, unchanged. We challenge comparison. Let the wise compare; let them judge; let them decide who is the debtor, the teacher, the benefactor—of whom. We waited long and not vainly; we are waiting still, and shall wait until, dazzled by the universal knowledge of God, man will cast off error and falsehood in all their glossy forms—false creeds, false gods, and false priests.



## CHAPTER X.

### OUR PHILOSOPHIC REALITIES.

IN the following paragraphs we propose to present a few succinct ideas of our leading post-Biblical thinkers, thus conveying a slight conception of what may be properly called Jewish philosophy. Well may we ask whether Judaism, with its all-embracing Monotheistic Theosophy and a system of humanitarian ethics, is seriously in need of any philosophy or Theology to idealize it. Our answer must be in the negative, since revealed religion necessarily precludes rationalistic or speculative subtilization, appealing to intuition, not to reason, as a basis for further development. Jewish philosophy is, therefore, logically considered, a philosophy of interpretation, not one resting on hypothesis. In this Philo leads. His fundamental thesis—which is that of the Jewish Alexandrian school—is, God being Eternal, the universe being His work, and revealed Scripture teaching His will, how are we to understand all these things? If Greek thought agrees with the Sacred Records, there was no doubt in the minds of Aristobulus and Philo, that the harmony was due to Hebraism being the mother of ideal Hellenism. Jewish speculation begins, text in hand, as it were, its foundation being the Divine Word as revealed. Yet this thesis, limited as it appears, is, in reality, so vast in scope that, instead of chaining free thought, all thought is amazed at the very contemplation of the stupendous theme wherein God, eternity, infinity, apart from everything therein perceivable and unperceivable, are central ideas. Thus is the subject and the object of Jewish philosophy well defined. God, the universe, and man therein being facts, what is their relation to each other? What is the goal of human life here below? Is revelation explicit in satisfying progressive thought? *It is plainly evident to him.*

says Philo, who penetrates the spirit of the Divine Word, in which all human thought and much more is contained. Settled in this respect, Jewish philosophy thenceforth proceeds to assimilate whatever is compatible with its unshaken postulates. Thus, whenever there was misinterpretation or misunderstanding touching Scriptural lore, to undeceive the vulgar and the letter-worshiper, the Jewish philosopher interposed reason or allegory, sometimes availing himself of non-Jewish thought to show how truth, found elsewhere, was but a faint reflex of truth revealed to Israel. In this way did the mediæval and modern Jewish thinker often fulfill the mission of the ancient prophet. Seeing the Jewish mind incline toward dead, stagnant forms, substituting a new kind of idolatry for the living Word of God, to be adapted to the needs of all times and conditions, he hastened to disabuse it by separating the dross from the gold, and by eliminating the gross and superstitious from the spiritual beauties hidden in the Sacred Text.

The *gaon* Saadia, who flourished during the first half of the ninth century, is a type of the kind we are referring to. President of the academy of Sura, and venerated not alone on account of his extensive scholarship, but more so on account of the highest manly virtues, Saadia's genius astonishes the student of Jewish thought. Blind faith and literal reading of the Scriptures Saadia rejects as unworthy of a true, intelligent Israelite. His conviction is that the Jew is in duty bound to apply reason in examining matters of creed—reason standing, in his judgment, next to Revelation in its ability to reach truth, though its success in trying to reach that goal be tardy, toilsome, and gradual, while Revelation is a free Divine gift bestowed on mankind. Commenting on the Pentateuch, Saadia does not hesitate to allegorize the most unaccountable miracles, such as the speaking of the serpent to Eve, or the dialogue that is recorded as having occurred between Balaam and his mule. Satan among the heavenly powers, as spoken of in Job, is an allegory. In short, like Philo, Saadia finds every noble thought and the sum of all idealism in the Old Testament, making all knowledge at his disposal tributary to

this Book of books, the Truth of truths. Haiï, a later *gaon*, is one of Saadia's loyal and worthy followers. In a true Philonic spirit Haiï symbolizes every idea conflicting with sane reason. "There is no doubt," says this *gaon*, "that The Almighty cannot be compared with any other being or spirit. He being far removed from all manifestations of human nature—such as weeping, laughing, joy, or anger—so that every allusion of our sages, in this sense, must not be taken in its literal meaning, but is intended as an illustration or simile drawn from things perceivable to the eye. Thus, when the *Torah* speaks of God's hand, wrath, and eye, it is only by way of parable, according to the speech of man." And this Haiï was the head of a great Jewish school, at the beginning of the eleventh century.

We have had a word of Avicebron under the name of Ibn Gabirol, as a poet of ethereal wing. We are now going to know him as a thinker of the highest grade, whose works, appearing in the eleventh century, had a great influence on philosophic speculation for many succeeding ages. Avicebron's system seems in many vital points to be the original, after which Giordano Bruno, excepting the Italian's lack of reverence, shaped his philosophy. To Avicebron Theology has a threefold object: to obtain knowledge of matter and form; to recognize the Divine Will or creative Word; and to secure some comprehension of the Supreme Divine Unity, Who underlies all variety of spirit, matter, and form. Perfect knowledge of God is impossible; the imperfect possessing no means to conceive of the most perfect. By His Will the Infinite is related to, and operates on, the finite. The relation of all creations and creatures to the Creator is regulated by the Divine intermediary—Wisdom. This is the necessary Jewish basis. All matter springs from one universal matter; all form from one universal form; all souls come from One Universal Soul. There is a gradation in the scale of being, beginning with the lowest and grossest, the clod and the element, the plant and the animal, and rising to the highest, the Divine Will or Unity. The links which make up the metaphysical chain between the lowest and the highest are: the principle of motion



in material things; the vegetative soul, as that of the vegetable kingdom; the vital soul, as that of the animal kingdom, except man; the rational soul like that of man; and the Unbounded Intellect, which fills all space, and is the Will of the Supreme. From this highest Source goes forth all activity, life, and inspiration, the lower in the scale being influenced by the one immediately above and so on, until all infinity is controlled by the All-Containing Divine Unity.—Is not this principle of Divine Unity in universal variety all that Bruno of the sixteenth century has to tell us? Bruno's *causa immanes*, the only primordial principle, the God, who is the beginning, the middle, and the end; the Whole, the Eternal, the Infinite, Free, Living, Active, and Creative Intelligence, is the Divine Unity of Philo and Ibn Gabirol. So is his living cosmos permeated and inspired by the ONE of Israel.

On perceiving the latest tendency of empirical science and speculative thought to trace variety to unity, do we not see an old system in a new dress? There is a change in terminology, not in substance. A good deal of what is passing as original with the moderns, has been anticipated by Jewish thought. Having made the acquaintance of Avicbron, we turn to Carlyle, Emerson, and others, and what do we discern? An endeavor to show that we are waking and sleeping, musing and dreaming, in the bosom of Unbounded Intelligence; that we are what we have made of self; shall be what we are aspiring to; that every one is a world in self to self; that all selves are traceable to One Universal Self; and stone, tree, brute, man, and star are all correlated, varying in form, grade, and appearance, not in substance, nor in goal. If Philo and Avicbron did not say all this, what did they teach? The Jew has taught all that ages before.

When we turn to the philosophical reflections of our sweet, gentle bard, Jehudah Halévy, we find them less deep than those of Philo and of Ibn Gabirol; but they breathe the tenderest of feelings and the convictions of a heart elevated by profound reverence, purified by suffering, and callous to martyrdom. Halévy sees in Israel the religious heart of all the nations, the most precious, yet most delicate organ exposed all

around to danger, but strong enough to sustain itself successfully. The end of Israel's martyrdom is to try him and to strengthen his faith; to rid the gold of its dross, and thus preserve it for the benefit of humanity. Our revealed religion is but a development of natural religion, and favors neither asceticism nor sensualism, but is intended to supply all our faculties with the healthy nutrition which furthers the harmonious development of all our being. Judaism approves only of such worship as springs from a combined sentiment of reverence, love, and joy; and it attaches no more importance to the Day of Atonement than to the Feast of Rejoicing. Israel's faith is based either on Sinaitic Revelation, or on later authorities, who, in enacting laws, were prompted by surrounding conditions. In order to secure the salutary development and application of the Divine Law, it is allowed to interpret Scripture, but wisely, and to enact new laws if necessary. Only the untutored are forbidden to change aught in the Law; not so the learned, who will never act against the spirit of Revelation. The sufferings of Israel prove nothing either against his future or his great mission, considering that Christians as well as Moslems are glorying in their martyrs who willingly endured shame, torture, and death. Would not a word, a change of confession, render us the equals of our oppressors? But the Jew prefers martyrdom to treason, ever loyal to his Providential appointment. While suffering in dispersion, Israel resembles the buried seed hidden in the soil in order to assimilate the ingredients necessary to its sustenance. Christianity and Islamism are both harbingers of the Messianic era.

Such are a few of our poet's reflections found in his *Cuzari*, the well-known imaginary dialogue a Jewish scholar is assumed to have held with the king of the Chazars, a Tartar tribe, who, having examined the doctrines of the three great religions, gave preference to Judaism. Heine calls Halévy "a great poet, a star, a luminary of his time; his songs formed a pillar of light, preceding Israel in the wilderness of his exile." Generous was the heart that, sighing under the weight of the oppressions of an unrighteous Church, accorded it a noble mission on earth—a sentiment also expressed by Maimonides.

A bolder figure in the fields of Jewish free thought, is Abraham Ibn Ezra, the famous poet, philosopher, mathematician, and grammarian. His was the daring task to pave the way to modern Biblical criticism, though we are not aware that due credit has been given him in that province. Neither Renan, nor Wellhausen, nor any other of the Bible dissectors has dealt with more frankness and hardness than Ibn Ezra in subjecting matters thought before infallible to the test of a critical analysis. No obscure point in the Pentateuch escapes his notice, and his criticism is sufficiently plain; so plain, indeed, that his co-religionists found cause to suspect his orthodoxy; a suspicion which for a long time denied him a settled, peaceful existence, for poor Ibn Ezra was in the truest sense a wandering Jew.—Ibn Ezra claims more regard for the understanding of the heart—*כי יש בלב דיעה*—than for many an obscure doctrine sound common sense is at a loss to comprehend. He stoutly maintains that reason is the link between God and man, that the Law was not given to the uninstructed, and that rational interpretation of the Divine Word was the bulwark of Judaism.<sup>40</sup> We are not permitted here to show the critical insight of this great genius, who sacrificed bodily peace to mental freedom. Ibn Ezra is the embodiment of Jewish rationalism, fearless, deep, sharp, daring, uncompromising, speaking his mind, come what may. His misfortune was to have been eight centuries in advance of his time. Such a versatility of genius has never since been met in one and the same person; no, not even in Voltaire and Goethe, whose greater and better chances were their only distinction, in face of poor, wandering Ibn Ezra.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> לא ניתנה התורה לאשר אין דעת לו, והמלאך בין אדם ובין אלהיו הוא שכלו.

<sup>41</sup> Whether Ibn Ezra's adventure in Jehudah Halévy's house—where, by finishing a poem of his hospitable friend, he was recognized as the famous Ibn Ezra and secured the hand of Halévy's beauteous daughter—be true or not, appears to us of less importance than the testimony Maimonides bears to his scholarship and character. For in writing to his son Abraham, Maimonides urges him to waste no time in reading commentators, except Ibn Ezra's, whose writings "are most valuable and useful to all who understand them; for his works require diligent study, profound meditation, and persevering assiduity; but they richly

Almost contemporaneous with Ibn Ezra lived and worked that giant laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, Moses ben Maimon, or, as he is popularly known and revered, Maimonides, the physician of the Sultan Saladin, and the greatest authority in mediæval Judaism; a powerful individuality whose influence over his people extends even down to this day.<sup>42</sup> The mere fact, that Spinoza and Mendelssohn received their first philosophical impetus from a study of that great light in Israel,

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deserve the labor that is bestowed on them, for deep and extensive knowledge is the reward of him who makes himself master of the precious stores with which they abound. I myself confess that I am deeply indebted to Ibn Ezra for the light which, through his aid, I have obtained, and the clear view which he has given me of many obscure passages in Sacred Scripture." Maimonides assures his son that Ibn Ezra was "animated by the same spirit of truth as our father Abraham; that 'he neither fears nor flatters any man,' nor allows fallacy to shelter behind the great fame of its author, but has 'one object in view, namely, truth.'"

<sup>42</sup> In proof of Jewish sullen resistance to all intrusion from without, and the rigid isolation of Israel among idolatrous and trinitarian nations, Gibbon remarks that "the wise, the humane Maimonides openly teaches that if an idolator fall into the water, a Jew ought not to save him from instant death." In justice to truth we beg to quote these lines of that same Maimonides: "Every Israelite ought to treat the resident Gentile in civil intercourse precisely as he would treat a brother Israelite. We are commended to sustain their wants; we are enjoined to visit their sick, to bury their dead, to distribute charity among their poor as well as to the destitute brethren of our faith, for the sake of peace." And the *grand Sanhedrin* convened by Napoleon unanimously declared: "That by virtue of the Mosaic Law given to Israel's seed, they are at all times held to consider as brethren all men who acknowledge God Creator of heaven and earth, and all those among whom they enjoy the advantages of civil society, or only the benefits of hospitality; that the Sacred Law commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves; that in consequence of this doctrine, concerning which there exists not the least dispute among the Rabbis whose authority we recognize and with which every Hebrew, who arrives at a mediocre knowledge of his religion becomes conversant, it is our unqualified duty to love, aid, and protect our countrymen, and to behave toward them in every civil and moral respect as if they were adherents to the Law of Moses." It should be borne in mind that this was the explicit declaration of a grand body of strictly orthodox Jews. How long will it take before a body of orthodox Gentile priests will reach similar conclusions?

ought to be sufficient to put Maimonides in the Parthenon of the noblest thinkers. This Moses was, in a measure, the second powerful law-giver in Jewish history; for he virtually brought about a renaissance in Hebrew literature and thought. It being beyond the set compass of this work to discuss the debatable effect his vast compendium entitled the *Yad Hachazakah*, or *Mishné Torah* produced on the legal and ritualistic growth of rabbinical Judaism, we shall confine our notes to a brief mention of his leading philosophic work, the *Moréh Hannebuchim*, or "Guide of the Perplexed." Before quoting a few lines to indicate the spirit of that great effort, it should be noticed that, like Philo and Ibn Gabirol, Maimonides undertook to harmonize Jewish and Hellenic ideas, Aristotle being his principal authority beyond Judaism; so much so that he has been accused of placing that wise Greek above Moses. Like Philo, Maimonides professes deep reverence for Greek philosophy, and, like him, he is a Jew to the very core of his heart, seeing in the Old Testament *the* Divine Revelation, full of symbols, mysteries, and the only source of ethical idealism.

We have elsewhere shown how Maimonides interprets the advent of Messiah; the following ideas are drawn from his "Guide of the Perplexed." In his concluding lines to the forty-seventh chapter of the second part of the *Moreh*, Maimonides, after referring to the habitual error of man who takes literally such phrases as the "gates of heaven," or the "skies opened," emphatically observes, "Use thy intelligence in studying things and you will soon learn to distinguish between what has been taught by metaphor, by hyperbole, by allegory, and by the literal sense originally implied in the wording as it appears. Prophecy will then become lucid to your conception; your doctrines will be reasonable and acceptable to the Lord; for truth alone is welcome to God, to Whom falsehood is hateful." This is an urgent appeal to the reasoning faculty of an age in which the dead forms and meaningless ceremonies usurped the throne of individual free thought. To Maimonides "prophecy is a Divine emanation, endowing reason, feeling, and fancy with a superior degree of spiritual energy, perspicacity, and vivacity. It is the highest state of the imagina-



tive faculty. The prophets had no other calling than that of upholding the Mosaic Law, and of furthering its principles. The prophets had to be ideal men, prepared to speak truth even in face of death. As they received inspiration by dreams and visions, they must needs have been possessed of great imaginative faculties; yet the reality of their prophetic perception was subject to no doubt whatever, since their conviction imparted strength to their spiritual ecstasy."

Maimonides defines evil as nothing positive save "the absence of the good." "Those evils which man inflicts on man are the result of ignorance, which is the absence of science. Just as the blind, unguided, hurt themselves and others, so are the ignorant inflicting sufferings on one another, which are hard to endure. The recognition of truth alone causes hatred to disappear. The vulgar imagine that there is more evil than good in the world. Every fool imagines the universe to exist for him only, and, his wishes continuing unfulfilled, he concludes that all being is bad. In reality, however, the vast aggregate of humanity amounts to very little in face of the immense universe. Man is largely the author of his own misfortune. Through our own weakness we are often obliged to appeal for help. The virtuous and the cultured realize the Wisdom that upholds the universe; they, too, yielding to the physical demands or cravings of the body, endeavor to satisfy them by securing bread to eat and a garment to cover one's self, without courting the superfluous. What man needs is air, water, and food, all of which nature supplies in abundance and at a low price."

The perfect serenity breathing through these lines one does not frequently meet in the tomes of modern philosophy, and not too often in those of ancient thought. Semitic serenity is of a different type from that of the Aryan; it is perfectly unruffled, without the least undercurrent; it is the serenity of the blue firmament, not that of the apparently calm, but ever restless, ocean. Behind the serenity of the Greek what an intense flow of passion; what a glowing lava stream of despair; what a deep of emptiness and doubt! Plato hopes, more than believes, that the soul is immortal; to Philo it is a

positive fact that man is deathless, being a part of God Himself, Who is to him more of a reality than earth, sun, moon, and stars. There is a void in the heart of the Aryan stock, which no artificial religion of a mythical redeemer, a crucified god, could ever fill. The human soul is vaster, deeper, and grander than that untenable salvation scheme, good enough to mislead the credulous, but utterly impotent to allay the spiritual thirst of thinking men. Therefore does Schiller lament the fall of the mythical gods; Voltaire laughs and scoffs at religion as he learned to know her from contact with her dissolute representatives; therefore does Rousseau reason himself out of reason; does Goethe long meditate self-destruction, finding comfort in heathen art and immoral indulgence; therefore does Schopenhauer see in the suicide of the race the only way of escape from a detestable universe and a life that is misery. And what means Darwin's subtle skepticism, Spencer's open God-defiance, and Haeckel's self-made creation? It is that fearful vacuum in the soul that turns immensity into a terrible blank and life into a dark Walpurgis carnival of intoxicating lust. What a divine reconciliation, that of the Teutonic Jupiter, the author of "Faust" and "Tasso," who, having escaped suicide, failed to escape libidinous pleasures! A great but heathen genius, heart and soul, is that of Goethe, with little of faith, less of ethics, and much of sterile skepticism and unholy verbosity. In "Faust" you see the author's very self, mad, doubting, hungry, thirsty, faithless, hopeless, fearing, daring, seeking and finding relief in carnal diversion. But the void in the soul remains as void as ever, with nothing save a mythical man-god to fill it. In vain do you ask consolation, light of the Church. She points to myth and miracle; she crucifies reason, free thought, free speech; she commends ignorance, blind faith, unconditional obedience; she beatifies infamous inquisitors, and dooms every rising, free, genius as a foe to her gods. Why lose patience with the invincible Semite, the Hebrew, who during four thousand years has endeavored to fill that hopeless void by planting therein his Omnipotent God? He it was who gave one Book to all men, for all times. Who did the like? From the Semite's loins sprang

that redeemer, who has, alas ! not yet redeemed those who are in need of redemption. Oppress, defame the Jew because he is loyal to conviction ? Had ancient heathendom been successful in extirpating Israel, where would Christianity, where Islam, take their rise ? The Church, nobody can deny, had and has a mission, but she failed to realize her love-ideal, failed to verify the least of her Utopias, while Judaism is an incontestable reality ; it is Judaism. The Jew may generally be said to be a Jew in theory as well as in practice. Can the same be generally said of the Christian ? At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Dean Swift painfully exclaimed, " We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another." Denying the Fatherhood of God to all mankind, how could the orthodox Church foster the brotherhood of man ? Good reason has Emerson to ask himself, " whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms, some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic ; *but in Christendom where is the Christian ?*" Irony of history ! Sounds of mercy, breath of love, deeds of hatred and blows of death, how reconcile these ? Give us an answer !

With Maimonides mediæval Jewish thought reached its climax, not because of paucity of Jewish brain, but because of the stagnant element in Israel that took umbrage at the inroads philosophy had made on orthodoxy. Symptoms of Jewish disloyalty were perceived in the rising generation ; at the same time a new sect of mystic enthusiasts rallied round teachers who promulgated Kabbalistic doctrines, harmless in themselves, but threatening to undo that splendid ethical realism for which Judaism is distinguished. That the alarm of the elders was not unfounded, showed the conversion of several prominent Kabbalists to Christianity, having recognized in the heavenly Adam of the *Zohar* the identity of Jesus. A convention of Jewish worthies, presided over by Solomon Ibn Adereth took place, who decreed that the age of twenty-five years alone entitled Jewish youth to philosophic study. How far Ibn Adereth himself was from letter-worship will be seen when it is stated that he discarded the idea of a supernatural

Revelation, assuming it to have been nothing more than a spiritual communion, God having revealed Himself to the mind, not to the senses, of Moses and Israel. When it is written in the *Torah* that the Almighty told Moses He would appear to him in a cloud, so that all the people should hear and forever believe, Ibn Adereth adds very significantly, "every thinker knows that the hearing was not that of the ear but of the soul; so is the seeing spoken of on that awful day, not that of the bodily eye but of the mind."<sup>43</sup> Yet when, five centuries later, Geiger uttered the same idea, it provoked the bitterest sentiments and aggressions.

Nor does Ibn Adereth stand alone in his rational view of what had been, until then, considered the miracle of miracles, essential to the divinity of Revelation. In his philosophical work, entitled *מלחמות ה'*—"the Wars of God," Levy ben Gerson, commonly known as Gersonides, a celebrity in his time, denies all miracles, including creation *ex nihilo*, a daring genius in philosophic thought coming very near Ibn Gabirol, save that mystic suffusion from which our poet philosopher is not entirely free. The intermediary Reason between the finite and the Infinite is philosophically assumed; prophecy is divested of the supernatural, for Providence, Gersonides thinks, reveals Himself more readily to the enlightened than to the ignorant, an idea of old, current in the Talmud, where the sage is placed above the prophet. The culminating thought of this thinker is that it lies with man to acquire, by study and meditation, more and more of that Universal Intellect which, as an ocean, envelops humanity. In the same spirit Joseph Albo wrote his *Ikkarim* or "Fundamental Principles," treating of Religion in General, the Existence of God, Revelation, and Retribution. Religion is here to control weak human nature, to prevent injustice and violence, and to lead man, by culture, to perfection. Hell is an allegory, doubtlessly intended to symbolize the barrier which, in the hereafter, the consciousness of guilt interposes

<sup>43</sup> הנה ששמיני העם מה שדבר עם משה. וכבר ידע כל בעל דעת שהשמיני הוא שמיני השכל לא שמיני החוש ר"ל הרגש באזן. וכן הראיה הנזכרת בענין המעמד הנכבד ההוא היה ראית השכל לא ראית חוש העין.

between felicity and the soul. "Maker of the universe, grant Thy servant peace of the soul, and Thy will be done," should be the prayer of the wise. Albo thinks that "resurrection, being unproved by Scripture and untenable before Reason's tribunal, has but tradition to sustain it."

We can barely touch upon a few ideas of Mendelssohn, whose life and work initiate a new period in Israel's history, a fact which it is not our business here to discuss. Nor would it be advisable for us to analyze here his noblest work, *Phædon*, or the "Immortality of the Soul," based on an imaginary conversation of Socrates, while in prison, with some of his pupils. The leading thought of this work is, that the soul, being essentially spiritual, cannot, like things material, be subject to mutation. In his "Jerusalem" Mendelssohn conclusively proves the sway of the Church over the State to be both illegitimate and detrimental to the organic prosperity of secular government. The Church has her province, and the State has another one; the one concerns herself with the spiritual well-being of a certain sect or creed; the other has to watch over the material prosperity of all citizens, who may or may not belong to the same sect or creed. A separation of Church from State is urged, a view heartily endorsed by Kant, who hailed this theory of an absolute separation as a great "promulgation of a grand reform, destined to be realized slowly but surely, and to embrace all religions." If it be true that Spinoza undermined the foundation of Christianity, Mendelssohn may be charged with the overthrow of its material walls. That prophecy of Kant has seen fulfillment. Except in semi-barbarous lands, the State has at last been emancipated from the surveillance of the Church. Neither Catholicism nor Protestantism, we may assume, gave any heed to the uncalled-for programme of the "hunchbacked little Moses." But the big Pharaohs have grown old and wise enough to see their folly. A little Moses, with a large head and a generous heart, may turn out a mischievous Bedouin to a Church of no head and no heart. The orthodox Church did not yet abandon the hope of turning the State into a subservient tool of intolerance and oppression; but, with her nimbus withered, her



influence is visibly dwindling. It must be humiliating and mortifying to have misused such brilliant chances of doing universal good, and to see that good gloriously done by the profane State. Ah, when did the Church dream of treating mankind with justice and humanity? Wherever her sway is not broken there is still darkness, intolerance, and persecution. Her seed of Erebus, scattered broadcast, will bear dark fruit in ages yet to come, but she knows that Prometheus broke his chain, and is abroad, torch in hand, to her a veritable Lucifer, and she has gathered in her baneful feelers.

In his "Jerusalem" Mendelssohn endeavors to put the question beyond doubt, that Judaism embodies eternal truths accessible to every intelligence, thus rendering it superfluous to crystallize Hebrew Monotheism into articles of faith. Moses did not teach *to believe* or *not to believe*, but *to do this* and *not to do that*. Faith cannot be enforced, it has to be imparted by suasion, wherefore ancient Judaism had neither many symbols nor set articles of faith. Maimonides was the first who conceived the idea of summing up Judaism in thirteen articles of faith. Joseph Albo reduced these to three, coinciding with those which Herbert of Cherburg proposed as the basis of natural religion. Albo has not been condemned on this account, because the saying of our sages has not been forgotten, that "Though these are tying and those are untying, all are engaged in interpreting the Living Word of God." The original precepts and doctrines of Judaism were not intended to continue immovable for all times, under all conditions, though everything around, language, customs, and manners, may change. So far from this, our teachings were, on the contrary, transmitted through the oral living word, subject to circumstances, and susceptible of adaptation to the requirements and the aptitude of the student, while the written Law and ceremonies furnish the head of the family with the best material for instructing youth. Ceremonies are calculated to keep religion a living influence, they being in a manner an illustration and a monitor. The invention of printing, while a good thing in itself, has the disadvantage of isolating the student; oral instruction, on the other

hand, necessitates social intercourse, thus challenging zeal and emulation. There could, in Israel, be no conflict between church and state, God Himself being the Sovereign of the people and His Law their constitution. Therefore was blasphemy treated as a national crime, as high treason, to be visited with condign punishment. Sabbath-breaking was a violation of the civil as much as of the spiritual Law. Yet was the transgressor treated with utmost mildness. No, the guilty could not at all be punished unless warned prior to his second commission of the crime by two impartial witnesses of the first, and enlightened as to the punishment attached to the transgression. Judaism did thus not punish incredulity, but the state did. This is confirmed by the fact that, the Temple having been destroyed and the Jewish nationality dissolved, the rabbis abrogated every coercive law, imposing none but that of voluntary penitence.—Writing to a distinguished friend, Mendelssohn states that our religious ceremonies are very important as a bond of union as long as polytheism and anthropomorphism were dominant around the globe. “As long as this plague of reason exists, the true Theists ought to form a defensive alliance against the polytheistic missionary.” In the same letter he further adds: “We should combine all our efforts to reform abuses, to expound the true meaning of our religious exercises, which hypocrisy and formalism conspire to render vain and unintelligible.” Was not Mendelssohn a reformer? a Jewish reformer?

These cullings, gathered from the voluminous tomes of Jewish thought, though too meagre to represent the several systems in all their bearings, are sufficient to indicate the unanimous spirit of reverence manifested toward Holy Writ and revelation, as furnishing the basis for ideal superstructures. Jewish philosophy, well conscious of human inability to fathom the Infinite, turns all attention to man, not as a Jew, but as a man, and, with the Sacred Text ever present, it boldly determines and defines his position on earth and his station in the universe. The royal position man holds on earth is not a matter of mere claim or unjustified pretension, but one of quality and destiny, thus ordained by an inscrutable law.

Just as oil will float on the surface of water so will the human mind assert its supremacy over creation, whether partly or wholly developed. Every man is born to be a king, a demi-god, "but a little less than an angel," with powers to control matter, mould and foster mind, rise to lofty dignity and superiority, change conditions and surroundings, and surmount the limitations nature sets to his endeavors. But few realize the might and possibilities latent in their being; in other words, few know the position assigned to them on this planet, the sovereign endowments vested in their spirit; and thus, instead of soaring on eagle's wings toward the sunny beam, they choose to grovel in mire with the senseless down-trodden worm. Was the chronometer invented to measure the intervals between meals or dances, or to embellish the bust of a fool? The chronometer is a precious instrument for the seaman, and for him who has cause to measure time by the fraction of a second. Human skill is seldom wasted without a purpose; in this, man follows the example set by nature, in whose vast realms every seed is destined to bear fruitage. To supply his daily wants man needs not those supernal qualities he is endowed with. He could bodily subsist—as other animals do—by the force of instinct. Wherefore, then, those precious gifts of soul? Wherefore this world entirely left to his control, a star teeming with wonders hanging in infinite space? Above, there immensity spreads studded with billions of stars, rising and setting day after day as if challenging the son of earth to look up, contemplate, wonder, and learn what he knows not and ought to know. Shall man toil to eat and eat to toil? Must it be so? and is this the be-all and end-all? Reason and thought say, No! Man's goal on earth is not to be enslaved by matter, but to control it. Manhood ceases the moment one, obeying material pressure, or, what is worse, animal greed, or, what is worse than all, low, uncontrollable passion, says, *I must*. No man must do aught degrading human dignity, lowering his value, withering the soul's divine lustre, for he is the image of God, born to rule this earth by learning to rule self. He *must not* if he does not want.

Judaism assigns mankind this sovereign position on earth.

But earth is a star among the stars. The popular notion of nether and upper worlds is not sustained by scientific facts. By day the sun is above this earth, by night this earth is above the sun, but beneath other stars, which are in turn one above or below the other, or none above the other, as the case with the spokes of an ever-rolling wheel would be. Of course, all the stars cannot be in the centre of the universe. Our sun is the centre of a group of planets, and, with all his satellites, is called a solar system. The universe, astronomers tell us, is full of solar systems held together by central suns. It is thus evident that we are as likely to be in the heart of the universe as in the outskirts thereof, which makes no difference whatsoever, infinity being full of Divine Glory. What everybody may see and easily comprehend is the close relation that exists between this world and the others within sight. The sun sends us volumes of light indispensable to our existence, and delegates the moon to perform this office at night. The stars rise to show their intimate relation to this their sister sphere, so that, while we habitually speak of the heavens above and the earth beneath, we are actually in heaven, with stars above, below, before, behind, to right, to left, and everywhere.

Such being the relation of this globe to those around it, what is the position of man in the universe? Granted his royal supremacy over all nature, as it appears to us here, is this his highest and only distinction? There are strong reasons to favor a different view. If Providence planned no other end for man than that of a temporary duration to end with a hopeless return to eternal silence, He would not have bestowed on him such celestial gifts as He denied to every other creature we know of. We have, then, either to admit that there are things in the universe which are for no purpose, which idea would imply a very imperfect Creator, or none at all, or to sustain revelation by a philosophical endeavor to account, as much as it is in our power, for all things intellectually, having realized the wisest design of Supreme Wisdom intuitively.

Well, then, man harbors dreamings and longings, without which, had he no other destiny than bringing his earthly

drudgery to a close, he could do well enough; no, better than now, when his energies are divided in an incessant combat of the noblest aspirations against the lowest proclivities of human nature. Observation teaches that the most intelligent animal possesses no more of sense, instinct, and energy than are necessary for the preservation of the species. Instinct induces the beaver to provide for the cold season, and leads the migrating bird to warmer climes. If man has a great deal more of divine powers, energies, and faculties than he needs to assert his rule over this creation, it is reasonable for us to conclude that the apparent superfluity of gifts is, indeed, not superfluous, but has been intended for higher uses. What are these uses? We perceive in human nature the irresistible impulse to grow, to grow in age, in influence, in power, in fame, in wealth, in wisdom, in everything that tends toward greatness. This unquenchable thirst for more than we are and have, this conscious striving for aggrandizement in every shape, while it indicates that the possibilities of human growth are, in many respects, unlimited, it at the same time furnishes the proof that the confines of this world are not those of our soul. Either we must resign our claim, faith and consciousness, that the spirit of man is the Breath of The Almighty, or accept it as the fact of facts, that, as God fills the universe and transcends it, so man, the ideal and thinking, has, under certain conditions, access to the whole universe and its Maker.

Such are the necessary conclusions of Jewish cosmogony and philosophy. Upholding the faith in the existence of the Infinite God, Whose Wisdom ordains all for the wisest ends, and, basing the divinity of the human soul on her Divine origin, Judaism impliedly extends the limits of man's duration to eternity, and the confines of his active or passive being hereafter to the remotest bounds of the universe. What is of vital importance in this consideration is the proper use of that individual free will which makes man arbiter of his own destiny here and hereafter. Apart from virtue's being her own reward below, we know that a man's career is not buried with him. Why, then, should we doubt that good or evil deeds which survive their author here do follow him beyond the



grave to determine his position in the universe? Is not such an assumption perfectly compatible with universal justice? Nature reveals her selections. The flower blossoms not in uncongenial climes; life flees the pestiferous swamp, the fetid exhalation; and the rainbow shines not on winter's dreary horizon; beauty, harmony, and order dwell not with deformity, discord, and confusion; and we should doubt that the ethereal habitations of virtue are separated by untraversable abysses from the abodes of vice. Why should we?



## CHAPTER XI.

### ISRAEL'S GOD AND HIS LAW.

LOYAL Israel sees in the Theocratic Law the essence of all wisdom, the keystone of all ethics and religion, and the basis of perfect justice such as have never been approximately reached in any other code. But this is not universally admitted by the non-Jew, our Law being to the Christian largely replaced by the New Testament; to the Mohammedan entirely so by the Koran. Among all the forms of government discussed by old and modern writers Theocracy meets with slight consideration, it having always been, and continuing to be, a distinctly Hebraic ideal of government, founded on laws as eternal and immutable as the Sovereign from Whom they are derived. Since we are confidently looking to the time when Israel's God shall be the One of the human race, it is natural for us to expect that HIS LAW is destined to be THE LAW of all mankind, an expectation which needs much to be fully realized. As compliance with the fundamental principles of natural religion brings man face to face with the Monotheistic ideal, so does every attempt to legislate in the interest of universal justice derive authority and vitality from the Mosaic legislation. Idealize whatever form of government you please, the Theocratic form towers above all, and must be so as long as God and His laws are so infinitely greater than men and their laws.

On comparing Moses to other law-givers, the myth of Thor and of Skrymir presents itself to the mind. Thor, the thunder-god of Northern mythology, who is armed with a mount-cleaving mallet, a magic belt of strength, and a pair of prodigious gloves, undertakes an expedition against the obnoxious giants, a race of tremendous Titans who inhabit the city of Jotunheim. Thor has no small opinion of himself, and doubts

not his ability to chastise those mischievous prodigies. On his way the thunder-god spends the night in a cave, is alarmed by a fearful earthquake, and rises early to discover to his amazement that he was sleeping in the glove of one of those Titans he was going to undo, and that the earthquake was nothing else but the snoring of that huge sleeper. Irritated by jealousy Thor concludes to slay the Jotun, but vainly applies his enormous hammer to make an impression on the skull of the giant. Scarcely noticing the repeated onslaughts Thor has made against him, Skrymir rises quietly from his rest, introduces himself to his baffled foe, rubs his eyes, and, parting company with the small assailant, advises him to be cautious in dealing with the giants of Udgard Loki, for they "will not brook the boastings of such little fellows as you are."

Good advice this for the great and small founders of great and small religions, who, pretending to look down on Mosaism as an antiquated code, have manufactured a number of new fictitious salvation schemes, snoring all the while in the glove of him whom they claim to excel. Welcome all; the paradise of fools is large enough, and the Pope's benediction is for sale; get it and be saved, if sky-rockets are as good as suns and the palm-tree not more than the weed. But what shall we say of those who never cease to confess their deep veneration for the Revealed Law, and belie their confessions by planting idols in the sanctuary of Jehovah? At night we may well be satisfied with the taper, be pleased with the oil lamp, delighted with the incandescent candle; but Aurora rising in the East and Phoebus following in her trail, of what use is all artificial illumination? Ah, not the savage alone exchanges jewels for tinsel. Huitzilapachtli gave way to a substitute, and Aztec madness was exchanged for a lesser foolery. So is mankind being slowly redeemed from the trinitarian fancy, one phantom vanishing after the other before the Breath of "The Lord of the spirits of all flesh."

Old is error, older deception, and superstition is the oldest, antedated by ignorance and conceit. The Twelve Tables of Rome supplied Cicero with a basis for his Utopian code. A multitude of local laws had to furnish Plato and Aristotle

with material for brilliant political theories. They whose greatest law-givers, after Minos and Draco, were the stern Lyeurgus and the polite, practical Solon, could not readily behold an ideal statesman in Moses. They could not consistently go to "barbarians" for laws, whose God appeared a phantom to some and a mystery to others. Rome, who ever adopted the gods of subjugated nations, on coming in contact with Judea had for once to abandon the hope of comprehending a Deity Who would not submit to any kind of visible representation. Even to the learned Roman, Israel's God was an inconceivable Being, ruling a queer, unbending people, whose customs and rites Cicero and his contemporaries often misrepresented, decrying them as sheer superstition. The first encounter of Hebraism and Hellenism was written in blood. Not to study Jehovah, but to enforce the worship of Zeus, was the highest ambition of victorious Greece. In this she failed, as other powers before and after her did, and when Hebrew and Hellene met again it was to realize the spiritual affinity which idealized paganism, having risen to higher regions of thought, found stronger than racial hatred and prejudice, and an interpenetration of ideas and sentiments was rendered possible.

It was otherwise in Rome where Judaism was barely tolerated, often respected, but seldom, if ever, made an object of study, though eloquently commended by Josephus. The Divine Law was not easily reconcilable with the Twelve Tables, which the proud Roman venerated with an idolatrous reverence, though they were mostly borrowed from Grecian sources, which were, in turn, traceable to the Easterns, especially to the Hebrews. "They are," says Livy, "the fountain of law, private and public." Nothing grander in the world than the Tables, thinks Cicero. Like trinitarian Christianity, Polytheistic paganism could not readily adapt itself to Monotheistic Mosaism, since it was impossible to eliminate the One Eternal from His Law, of which the Decalogue is an epitome, and opens with the most positive emphasis of Divine Unity.

Since its very inception Christianity advanced the claim of being the universal substitute for Israel's world-mission.



Acknowledging, as it does, all the time, the priority and superiority of the Divine Law—which its founder came “to confirm and not to abolish”—the question has never been answered, why, in its administration of justice, does it rest its judicial measures mainly on heathen jurisprudence? This disloyalty to the Divine Word is strikingly conspicuous and lamentable when it is borne in mind that not one of those great social problems so happily solved by the Mosaic legislation has been successfully dealt with by the Christian Church and State. Neither did morality in general win by the teachings of the new creed. The results of so-called “Christian civilization” on human intercourse in the world of trade are given by many leading thinkers of modern schools. “On all sides,” says Herbert Spencer, “we have found the result of long personal experience to be the conviction that trade is essentially corrupt. In tones of disgust or discouragement, reprehension or derision, according to their several natures, men in business have, one after another, expressed this belief. Omitting the highest mercantile classes, a few of the less common trades, and those exceptional cases where an entire command of the market has been obtained, the uniform testimony of competent judges is that success is incompatible with strict integrity. \* \* \* It has been said that the law of the animal creation is ‘Eat and be eaten;’ and of our trading community it may similarly be said that its law is ‘Cheat and be cheated.’ A system of keen competition, carried on, as it is, without adequate moral restraint, is very much a system of commercial cannibalism.” On this side of the Atlantic we hear Rev. Samuel Harris, President of Bowdoin College, Maine, remark, “Society”—of course Christian—“is a scramble; every one crowding and hustling his neighbor to get ahead. Everywhere restlessness and anxiety; the capacity of contentment is lost; a civilization whose first principle is ‘Help yourself,’ and of which the *legitimate* developments are speculation and false balance-sheets, lying advertisements and unscrupulous adulteration, railroad swindles, gambling speculations, and *judicial bribery*.” And Emerson finds, likewise, that “the ways of trade have grown selfish to the borders of theft, and supple

to the borders (if not beyond the borders) of fraud." Such are the fruits of that Messianic morality destined, we are assured, to supersede our Divine Law. This is too earnest a question to be indifferently dismissed.

Roman and English legislation, it is affirmed, underlies all the jurisprudential systems of the civilized world. In those codes, however, the Divine Law is not explicitly recognized. When Austin speaks of those positive laws set by God to man, he refers to such as are revealed or unrevealed, revelation being to him identical with "natural reason," or "light of nature," or "dictates of nature." But nature and God are not to Moses synonymous terms. Neither is the utilitarian philosophy of Bentham, with his maxim of all good law and government being tested by their securing "the greatest happiness to the greatest number," an ideal approaching that of the Mosaic system. The greatest happiness of the greatest number is a maxim not rooted in absolute justice. Carried into effect, that principle would require the equal distribution and constant redistribution of wealth, which is usually the possession of the few; it would often necessitate the removal of such men as, by their stern opposition to general corruption, may be said to mar the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The sons of Israel have been trained to think that justice has neither to do with happiness nor with numbers, but simply with what is right or wrong, just or unjust, true or false. Does not the greatest happiness of the greatest number justify slavery, destruction of the rich, assassination of the mighty who rule? oppression and abuse of minorities? How could Bentham reconcile British rule over India with his theory of happiness in relation to numbers? It were a sad day for mankind were we obliged to sacrifice the happiness and rights of the minority to those of the majority. How shall murder committed by many on one be punished? To reduce the laws of government to a point of numbers, is it not returning to barbarism, where force alone, sustained by numbers, rules? If law be synonymous with justice, if justice be the pillar of truth, what can happiness and numbers have to do with law? When the Benjamites committed a heinous crime, the

question of numbers did not restrain Israel from chastising the whole tribe.

Here we strike the difference between Divine and human laws. The Divine Law is truth revealed, to be complied with irrespective of majorities or minorities. "Thou shalt not steal!" Whether one steals of a thousand or a thousand steal of one, theft is theft, the crime is a crime. Human law is, on the other hand, more or less utilitarian and arbitrary, often enacted to serve personal or political ends or aspirations. Divine laws are intended for all men and for all times; human laws are generally called forth by momentary needs, are local and selfish, calculated to benefit one nation, aye, often one class of men, not infrequently a few, or even one of the mighty in power or in wealth. Divine laws spring from Theocratic, unchangeable Sovereignty; human laws are enacted either by optional or arbitrary authority, in both cases subject to change. Savigny's theory that law, like language and other social habits, was the outcome of the consciousness of a people growing organically, applies not to the Divine Law as it is proved by the Mosaic system, where we see that the people did not make their Law, but the Law made the people. Strange fact, this, in history, a group of slavish tribes opening the grandest world-career with the Divinest of laws.

Only a few months since Archbishop Nicanor, of Odessa, spoke thus to the students of that city's university: "It is surprising to see the audacity of some ignorant people in trying to attack the greatest of the world's reformers in the person of Moses. Being such nonentities, they are only noticed when they advertise themselves constantly in the public press, but when people look closely into the matter they and their allegations die a natural death. If ever one of the world's great leaders was inspired by God, it was undoubtedly the prophet Moses. Where are now the laws of Lycurgus? Where are the laws of Solon? What influence had the laws of Confucius on human history? The Koran is simply a repetition and a mutilation of the Law of Moses. The teachings of Moses were the chief foundation of Christian morality, modern law-making and development. Philosophy, with all

its big-sounding names, is the outcome of the Old Testament. The Israelites are now, as they were in ancient times, one, united in religion, sympathy, and brotherly love, no matter what their nationality be. They seem to be especially protected by Providence, and they are going from strength to strength." The frank bishop has many more good things to say of the sobriety, economy, industry, religious loyalty, and sacred domesticity of the Russian, inhumanly treated Jews; and the contrast he puts forth by comparing the results of Judaism with those of orthodox Christianity, will be noticed by history as the expression of a righteous soul who, led by personal experience, reluctantly admits that the humble Synagogue has accomplished a great deal more than the imperious Church, the Gothic cathedral.

With these general remarks, let us turn for a moment to the Mosaic system and, as much as our space permits, see whether in matters of pure justice the world has outstripped the Revealed Law.<sup>44</sup> As the basis of our later jurisprudence, the Decalogue claims our first attention. In the Hebrew tongue the last five Commandments, with which we are here chiefly concerned, are expressed in twenty-six words, and their purport is, to our mind, the greatest wonder associated with the scene of Sinai.

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<sup>44</sup> Henry George sees in Moses "a mind in advance of its surroundings, in advance of its age; one of those star-souls that dwindle not with distance, but, glowing with the radiance of essential truth, hold their light while institutions, and languages, and creeds change and pass. From the free spirit of the Mosaic Law sprang that intensity of family life that amid all dispersions and persecutions has preserved the individuality of the Hebrew race; that love of independence that under most adverse circumstances has characterized the Jew; that burning patriotism that flamed up in the Maccabees and bared the breasts of Jewish peasants to the serried steel of Grecian phalanx and the resistless onset of Roman legion; that stubborn courage that in torture held the Jew to his faith. It kindled that fire that has made the strains of Hebrew seers and poets phrase for us the highest exaltations of thought; that intellectual vigor that has over and over again made the dry staff bud and blossom. And passing outward from one narrow race, it has exerted its power wherever the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures has been felt. It has toppled thrones, and cast down hierarchies."

Johannes von Mueller, honored as the German Herodotus, thinks that to compare Moses with modern law-givers, means to compare the pyramids with the palace of Versailles. The figure would have been truer had he placed the Himalayas in face of the Parisian hills. There is a criminal code in "Thou shalt not commit murder." The Cains are forever doomed, branded, embalmed in infamy. How fearful the word *murder*! The world recoils with horror when that word is sounded. Human sacrifice is murder; human outrage, brutality, torture, is but a part of murder. Murder, assassination by wholesale, is the charge that cleaves to the orthodox Church. How she reveled in bloodshed, torture, and outrage. Hers are horrible centuries of shame, revolting to the milder impulses of man. "Thou shalt not kill!" Macbeth murders Duncan, hires assassins for Banquo, but THE VOICE that avenged the blood of Abel, and rang from Sinai's top, wakes all the furies of darkness, who rest not until blood flows for blood. War is murder, wholesale massacre, abominable to the Lord. In self-defense alone is bloodshed justified; else the taking of human life in any form is murder. And so precious was human life to Israel that, even when called upon to avenge bloodshed, all possible delays and obstacles were interposed to retard execution, dreading the possibility of perpetrating legal murder. Cities of refuge were set apart to give accidental manslaughter a chance to escape blood vengeance; but neither altar nor sanctuary afforded protection to willful murder. Lynch-law is an abnormity heard of in the nineteenth century of love and grace; it was unheard of in Israel. The man hangs on the tree and the courts are silent as death, as if all passed off as it should be. The murdered man rots in his grave, his widow wears crape, while the prison's bar opens to the golden key, and the murderer drinks champagne with his warden. A city is in uproar; "murder most foul" was perpetrated; the assassin is arraigned, the testimony is strong; but O, that genius of a lawyer, and that Daniel of a judge, who allows a technicality to triumph over the inviolable dictates of justice! Shylock's treatment by an *impartial* Christian court is an illustration of judicial malpractice, which the Divine Law



condemns, even in poetry, as a perversion of justice. Like the Egyptian goddess, the justice of the Divine Law stands blindfolded, balance in hand. She sees not, but she hears, weighs, and judges, and from her verdict there is no appeal. Three thousand years before Emerson discovered the devil to be an ass, Mosaism doomed the tempter's snaky head to be bruised by his victim's heel. Next to idolatry, glossy lies are hateful to the Synagogue, but they are rampant in the policy of the orthodox Church. Still Christian men and women are, happily, as a rule, much better than orthodox Christianity, the audience humaner than its preachers, and the congregation better than the denomination, else the world would be much worse than it is. Somebody remarked, that the Jew was driven into a corner, which he turned into the world's counting-house, and made his signature on a scrap of paper of more value to thrones than the long lists of heraldic titles with nothing behind them. Exclusion and persecution guarded the Jew from the contamination of unhallowed influences, and his Divine Law is as genuine as on the Day of its giving. Our Moses and our Sinai, our Law and our God, are there; come and share in what is the legitimate heritage of all men. No counterfeits in Israel.

The drama of creation winds up with the wedding of the first man and woman. God Himself ties the connubial knot to stand as a type of sacred home life, whence all human happiness and virtue are henceforth to flow. A new barrier, holding out a curse against the licentious intruder into man's private sanctuary, is added by the seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The great modern legislator and jurist may rack his brains to invent a substitute for this moral bulwark uttered in two Hebrew words against the pollution of the most sacred of human relations. Mosaic laws must not alone be judged by what they explicitly say, but by what they imply. The inviolability, the sanctity of home, the divinity of human love, the chastity of womanhood, the sacredness of domestic peace and purity, are sufficiently provided for by those two Hebrew words which in Israel bore holier fruit than all the gospels and the heavy codes non-Jews have put in their

stead. He who knows the true Jewish family, with its filial love and parental devotion, its liberal hospitality, and its daily consecration of the highest home virtues, will admit that it is a temple in which the table is the altar and the parents the priests of the Most High. Happiness, prayer, blessing, reverence, and song are characteristic of the blessed Jewish home. Next to the Holy of Holies the most hallowed spot on earth to the Jew is his home. Therefore is celibacy and monachism so odious to Israel, being old enough to know what these imply. While Torquemada was burning Jews and Moors as heretics, the son of the *unmarried* Gonzales de Mendoza, grand cardinal of Spain, was engaged in a crusade against the infidels; a miracle to be sure. "His holiness" was as much venerated in Spain as the Pope in Rome, was the favorite of the Catholic sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, and, next to them the mightiest in the kingdom.

Two Hebrew words, "Steal not," make up the eighth Commandment. Non-Jews may confine stealing to larceny or burglary. The Israelite sees in it a positive law, a command against every possible practice tending unlawfully to deprive a fellow-being of lawful property. "Stealing knowledge," and "stealing the heart," are expressions of the Hebraic idiom. Deception, dissimulation, and flattery come under this heading. Bearing false witness against a fellow-being, which the ninth commandment forbids, is surely not to be limited to what in modern codes is punished as perjury. No! calumny, defamation of character, misrepresentation, and every false utterance against honor and honesty are comprised therein; it commands control of heart and tongue.—And what is not embodied in "Thou shalt not covet"? Greed and selfishness, the origin of crimes unnumbered are herein sweepingly branded as grievous sins. The Lord is hating selfish greed as the dark progenitor of untold woe and evil. Ah! the greedy, insatiate Church! How many victims perished not in the flames to appease her unholy thirst for gold! Those inhuman creatures of the Ecclesia, who, including the latest types of the anti-Semitic madness with its bloody sequels, have ever been at the bottom of all Jewish woe, ever inciting man against man; bloodthirsty, until

glutted with the gore or the wealth of the helpless. What is to them the Divine Law that forbids theft, infamy, lie, and murder? They have a new revelation, a new covenant more perfect than the old one. And lo! behold the results, the latest, of that Messianic realization of "peace on earth and good-will to men." Look at the Old World! what dreadful armaments; what bitterness of speech among the Messianic nations; what suspicions; what manœuvres; what lies in diplomacy; what tremendous strains to outdo a neighbor in the invention and construction of fatal engines! Not satisfied with the 'greatest navy the world has seen, Great Britain but lately voted \$90,000,000 to strengthen her terrible armada. France and Germany are studded with forts and barracks. Belgium has spent a fortune in fortifying her vulnerable points. Switzerland is doing her utmost in reorganizing her army. Italy is building monstrous men-of-war. Spain and Portugal are not behind in warlike preparations, while Russia, Austria, Turkey, and a group of smaller kingdoms are eyeing each other with the love of the wolf for the lamb.

Reviewing this appalling situation of things, the historian Emile de Laveleye, of Belgium, sums it up in the single fact, that with the modern ease of concentrating armies, the facility of bringing, within forty-eight hours, a host of seven million warriors into the field, with a reserve of ten million to back them, more human life may be destroyed in one day now than ever before in a protracted war. "And it is under this continual menace of the most frightful shock of armies that our planet will ever have looked upon, that we live, and the most extraordinary thing is that we get used to it," adds that chronicler. Will Christian nations, will the Church, will all the laws combine to counteract that impending slaughter of humanity by humanity? They will not, because they are all utilitarian institutions, conventional things, enacted and repealed by temporary interest. The pope never opens his lips without a lamentation for the loss of his temporal dominion, as dear to him, it appears, as paradise to which he is holding the key. Had he physical powers there would be no end of crusades and carnage *for the glory of the Messiah*. How many of the Ten

Commandments does the Vatican keep holy? Instead of the ONE ETERNAL, it worships "three gods;" a host of saints; it worships idols, pictures, and figures; it worships "graven images and the likeness of things above and below;" it is not guiltless of taking "His Name in vain." *Truth is the seal of God*, say our wise; truth is the *bête noir* of the Vatican priest. "God blessed the Seventh Day and sanctified it;" the bishops rejected it in exchange for *a day of heathen rejoicings*. And when did the Catholic monk enjoin honor of father and mother? he who forced children to bear false witness against their parents. And murder, and lewdness, and stealing, and false witness, and covetousness? The annals of no nation, though utterly corrupt, teem so densely with those vices as the dark chronicles of the mediæval Church. Judaism alone is rooted in the Divine Law, and we can point to millions of Jews who now as ever strive to live up to the letter and spirit of the Decalogue, and this in spite of all impediments.

Yet the Decalogue is the merest skeleton of a code modern jurists would do well to examine with more insight and less irreverence or undervaluation than they usually bring to the task, if they give it any thought at all. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to act kindly, and to walk humbly before thy God?" In these words of Micah, says Huxley, there is more religion than in all heathenized Christianity. On submitting Mosaism to a close analysis, the jurist might possibly reach a similar conclusion in regard to the relation of non-Jewish jurisprudence to the Divine Law. The chief justice, Paxson, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, in an address before the students of the University of that State, briefly indicated how heavily general jurisprudence has drawn on our Divine Law, concluding, however, with the rather threadbare and unsubstantiated assertion, that the law of love and mercy did not issue from the smokes of Sinai. It came from Golgotha, of course, and who, knowing the history of the alone-saving, loving, and merciful Church could have any doubt about it? However, is there really no love, no mercy, no humanity in the Divine Law? none in the nature of Israel's God? Perversion of truth! If there be no love,

no justice, mercy, and charity in the Divine Law, there are assuredly none in this world. Turn we to the Pentateuch first, and let Jehovah appear in all His Divinest Attributes, He Whom blasphemous tongues never cease to charge with cruelty in order to deify an invented saviour by extolling him above THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE. To despise and outrage the Jews and glorify their God was not a scheme to suit the holy ends of redemption. The salvation of the Christian necessarily presupposed the perdition of the Jew, and if Jesus be the meek "prince of peace," whose blood was necessary to appease the ferocious vengeance of his Father, then what a Father must He be! Such was the sacred logic the daughter religion applied against an unyielding mother and her God. The triumph won by the adoption of this policy was equal to that of the cur that bays at the moon. "You may deny that you are drunk," said the policeman to the Irish drunkard, "but can you refute it? You can? Well, walk up straight to that porch." The Irishman could not do it.

We ask the blasphemers of Jehovah to disprove His purest justice and sweetest mercy as they are a thousandfold impressed on the Hebrew's mind in our Sacred Scriptures. Human love, the stranger, the fellow-man, the poor, the orphan, the widow, the helpless, the innocent, the slave, the laborer, yea the animal, where have they more tenderly been looked after than in the Divine Law? Geiger calls attention to the fine sentiment expressed in the Mosaic warning not "to favor the poor before judgment," testifying to the consciousness of the law-giver, that the human feeling of pity was predominant in the Hebrew's individuality. Moses was less apprehensive of wealth corrupting the verdicts of justice, than of Jewish compassion with poverty. "One law shalt thou have for the native and the stranger." Our Union requires the stranger to be naturalized in order to share in all the benefits of the constitutional law and citizenship. "Thou shalt not vex the stranger, and shalt not oppress him." How many Christian States can boast of a similar law? "You shall not afflict the widow or the fatherless child." Lending money on interest is forbidden. By excluding the Jew from every field of industry and trade,



and by denying him the right to possess or cultivate land, the orthodox Christian forced him to earn a livelihood by loaning money on high interest, and then covered him with contumely because he did what he was forced to do.

"The ass of him who hates thee" do not "forbear to un-load," supposing the poor animal succumbs beneath its weight. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart;" and "*thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" That this refers not to the Hebrews only, we read on the same page—Lev. 13—"And if a stranger sojourns with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him; as one born in the land among you shall he be unto you; and *thou shalt love him as thyself.*" Anything more humane we do not know of, have not met with anywhere. "For a *Merciful God* is the Lord thy God," says Moses in Deuteronomy; and the Sabbath is to be observed by perfect rest from labor, extended to the servant, the stranger, and even to "any of thy cattle." Not alone man but brute creation shall be treated with mercy. The animal shall not be muzzled while threshing, shall be fed in due time, even before its owner takes food himself, and shall work with its equal in nature. Ox and ass must not plow together.

Moses describes God as follows: "The Lord your God is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the Great, the Mighty, and the Awful God, Who has no regard for persons, and taketh no bribe; who executeth justice for the orphan and the widow, and *loveth the stranger* to give him food and raiment. Love ye the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." The poor, the orphan, the widow, and *the stranger* are never lost sight of. The audacity to deny the God of Moses the attributes of love and mercy! "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant who may escape from his master." Humanity in the highest degree! Bards of this century sing of British soil as consecrated to liberty since it would not restore the fugitive slave to his master. So far did the world advance in human love within three millenniums. Slavery of Hebrew by Hebrew is God-accursed in Mosaism; "merciful" Christianity felt differently about that matter. But here is the sublimest picture of our Great, Just, and Gracious God. "The

Eternal, a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; showing mercy unto thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; but who will by no means always leave unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children, and upon the children's children to the third and to the fourth generation." These last lines, like the "tooth for a tooth" theory, have often been cunningly pointed to as an evidence of Jehovah's cruelty. Judaism, however, did never accept them in their literal meaning. We know well enough that children do suffer through the sins of their parents, especially when they persist in following in their footsteps. And this is what those lines imply, teach Israel's hoary sages.

Taken together with the times and conditions under which this spiritual likeness of Deity is drawn, it is a heavenly revelation of supreme justice blended with the sweetest grace and mercy. The attempt at replacing this Divine ideal by a something claimed to be diviner very much resembles the theatrical trick of outshining the sun by an artificial contrivance propelled by machinery across the scene. We beg to be forgiven for dropping this subject with a feeling of compassion for a clamorous multitude, whose arguments amount to the noise issuing from the void of a windbag. "Sir," said Macaulay to an addle-pated peer, who failed to grasp the reasons advanced by the great debater, "I can give you an argument, but I cannot supply you with good sense to comprehend it." Important as it is for the orthodox Church to take good care of her gods, we Jews can afford to let our God take care of Himself. The following tale is not without a good moral. An Irishman dealt a heavy blow on the neck of a Jew, because, said he, "Jew, you have killed my god." "Fool," cried the Israelite, "you may kill my God if you can get hold of Him." Ah, the Jews know too well who the god of Peter and Paul was, but when will the Church learn to worship the God of Moses?

An attempt to quote more of the Old Testament in proof of its humanity would make this chapter too long for a brief, general survey. Throughout Mosaism and Prophecy, as well as

within the heavy tomes of Talmudical lore, we are incessantly reminded of Israel's relation to God, and his duties toward the great human family. Jehovah is the Father of all men, of whom Israel is the first-born, the spiritual guide of the race. That the non-Jew's prayer may be heard by Israel's God when offered in His sanctuary, is the ardent petition of our wisest king. "Have we not all One Father? Has not One God created us all?" asks Malachi.

Enough. To return to our topic, we wish to point out one other great reality in the Divine Law, which ought not to pass the notice of social scientists; we allude to the inalienableness of personal right and property, which is a remarkable feature in the Mosaic legislation.<sup>45</sup> As slavery in Israel was a violation of the Divine Law, so was the transfer or tenure of real estate in perpetuity unlawful. The Israelite could neither sell himself nor his heritage forever—the remission years of the *Shemitha* and the jubilee having been insurmountable barriers. The problem of capital and labor could not arise in a land where everybody was a capitalist of non-transferable property. This enactment involves a sublimer principle than that of the great French Revolution, which was the principle of human fraternity, liberty, and equality. Granted human equality, the equal right of every man to a fair share of this world's goods and blessings follows as a necessity, and its denial amounts to robbery. It must not be in man's power to disown those sacred rights he derives from God. The Divine Law

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<sup>45</sup> Washington ascribes the greatest blessings of civilized society as flowing mainly from the "*pure and benign revelation*."—"We hold," says the Declaration of Independence, "these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." But Moses held over three thousand years before that, besides perfect human independence, man has a share in this world, which, like his bodily and spiritual freedom, is inalienable. Monopolies are, therefore, irreconcilable with Mosaism. The Declaration of Independence was certainly not composed in accordance with the spirit of the New Testament and the orthodox Church, but is an avowed homage to the perfect Divine Law.

punishes the Hebrew who offers to sell himself as a slave. By making the renunciation of one's liberty or property a violation of the Divine Law, human equality received the seal of Divine sanction, and it remains for modern jurists and legislators to determine whether mankind is sufficiently advanced to try what the Mosaic code did accomplish thirty-three centuries ago—the earth being the promised land of all men. Such is the design, yea, the mandate of the Divine Law. It has not been given to man to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but to guarantee the equal rights and promote the equal happiness of all men. The Divine Law invests neither church nor state nor any sovereign with power or authority to protect that minority who, unlawfully, in one way or another, deprive the great bulk of mankind of their heavenly birthright, their inalienable heritage. Tyranny and slavery, sovereign and subject, are branded as a degradation of human dignity, as a sinful abuse of power, by the Mosaic code. Samuel yields reluctantly to Israel's demand for a king. Compliance with the Divine Law renders a state of society such as the Church sanctioned and sanctions; a society of lords and slaves, tyrants and subjects, oppressors and oppressed, millionaires and paupers; a state of society in which the few have everything and the many have nothing, save the bread they earn with "the sweat of their brow," next to impossible, next to criminal.

The Divine Law favors none other than Theocratic government; that is, in Paine's reasoning, emphasized by Lincoln, the government of "the people by the people." Samuel was the first president of the most perfect of democracies, a man of God's appointment, one of the people, who ruled the land with the "rod of his lip." We feel safe in asserting that all modern writers on the sphere and function of government, from John Stuart Mill, who indorses the *laissez-faire* theory, to Herbert Spencer, who sees in government a mere agency of the people instituted for the protection of man's natural rights, are perhaps unconsciously but surely advancing toward the Divine Law and Theocratic democracy. "Men being by nature all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of his estate and subjected to the political power of another without

his own consent," is Locke's indorsement of Theocratic democracy. Locke is, however, behind Moses in his assertion that man's "own consent" is enough to divest himself of his natural right and heritage, an assertion rejected by the Divine Law. So is Humboldt's idea that the function of government is "to promote the absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity." Despite all disadvantages of intestine incoherence and political disintegration within, and an almost general hostility encountered without, Israel's state and genius prospered under Theocratic rule. Not before the Divine constitution fell into abeyance and Theocracy was gradually supplanted by arbitrary dynasties, was the doom of Judea sealed. Political changes and reverses, however, cannot seriously affect the authority of the immutable Divine Law; and no sooner did Israel restore his Theocratic constitution to the original reverence of the people than, even in dispersion, his national unity was secured.

Wherever the Jew's lot is cast he is patriotic, patriotism being admittedly a Jewish not a Christian virtue,<sup>46</sup> but he is at the same time religiously Theocratic, living under the light of his Divine Law. And if it be true that the fittest survive, if the world's history be God's tribunal through which His verdicts are given to man, if matter be, indeed, inferior to spirit, body to mind, falsehood to truth, physical to spiritual powers, if time be a test, and durability a confirmation of the truly Divine and imperishable, what lesson does the survival of Israel's seed scattered all the world over not teach? Call it pride, vanity, conceit; you must in fairness forgive the Jew his innate consciousness of being the favorite, the first-born, the ever-chastised, yet never-forsaken, son of the Most High.

The legend of the wandering Jew is historically significant. Christian superstition saw in that fabulous individual, who, having struck Jesus on his neck at the moment when, leaving

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<sup>46</sup> *Le patriotisme est un sentiment de l'ancienne loi, qui, théoriquement, n'a point de place dans la nouvelle; et le jour où l'Évangile a été prêché aux Gentils a été, en principe, le dernier jour des nationalités.—Le sentiment de la nationalité tel que l'entendent les Anglais est un sentiment essentiellement Juif, says John Lemoine.*



Pilate's gate, he dragged along the cross to which he was to be affixed, was cursed never to rest, but rejuvenated at the end of every century, to wander, a warning to mankind, the type of his wandering race. The Church found it good policy to teach that the Jews lost Zion and were dispersed among the nations, because they did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Their misfortunes were thus turned into a testimony of the divinity of Jesus, and to make the testimony emphatic the condition of the Jews had to be made as miserable as possible, since to oppress the Jew was tantamount to strengthen the Christian cause. This was the logic of the primitive and mediæval Church, and is a sentiment that is still rampant in semi-barbarous lands. That the Jews survived all miseries and multiplied was not thought a wonder of heroic patience, devotion, and endurance, but it was considered a miracle, destined to convince the erring that, like the wandering Jew, his race was denied the historic grave because he rejected Jesus and his Vicegerents. Such rigmarole is easily spread, readily accepted by the vulgar, but causes the intelligent to smile contemptuously. There lived never a race of a deeper sense for ideal felicity than the descendants of Abraham, who are preserved by their loyalty to the Divine Law and supernal Sovereignty, neither of which could be blazoned and taught without wandering, without mingling among the nations of the earth. What Abraham was commanded to do, his latest descendants are doing, they wander from the rising to the setting sun, teaching the Law and building the altars and temples of Jehovah. The stars wander and so the Jews, both to give light.

The struggle of principle *versus* policy is the keynote of Jewish history. The Mosaic code is all principle. Can this be said of other codes? Truth knows no policy, nor fear, nor majorities, nor power. Her dictates are: Do what is right, life has no other end. Seventy thousand mantles cannot hide the deformity of falsehood. The barbarous East has a class of specialists, old hags, whose business it is to cut sour faces and howl hideously in houses of mourning. The Occident can boast of a similar class of specialists, who are engaged in singing gleeful anthems to the new faith and doleful dirges to the

old one; but policy withers in face of principle. Disinherit the Jew and rise in his stead? How could this be done, the Divine Law being his dearest and your cheapest possession? Brutality may deny Israel a spot to rest his head; can it deny him his share in the universe? You may crucify the Jew, you cannot crucify his soul, nor can you replace his Law by any conventional code, nor darken the glories of his history. The Greeks labored hard to outwit and extirpate the people of the Divine Law. Roman wit was spent in stigmatizing the fidelity of Israel to his precious heirloom, and the Church recoiled from no crime that held out a prospect of detriment to the ancient race. How woefully they all failed need not be rehearsed here. Judaism lives, an honored, mighty, vital influence, a constant menace to all modernized idolatries, spreading like the fruitful bough of Joseph, "a fruitful bough by the well, its branches spreading over the wall. And the archers harassed him, and they assembled in multitudes and persecuted him; but his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands remained firm. From the hands of The Mighty One of Jacob, from Him, the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel; from the God of thy fathers, who shall help thee, and from The Almighty, who shall bless thee, will come upon thee blessings from heaven above, blessings from the deep that spreadeth beneath, blessings of the breast and of the womb."

This century has seen a noticeable change in the attitude of enlightened Christians toward the old faith and its adherents, promising a sound conception of the fatal error—to say nothing of its criminal aspect—orthodox churchmen indulged in by unwisely degrading their own creed in defaming the mother who gave it soul, bone, and sinew. The God-reality which permeates the Divine Law and the core of Judaism is as indispensable to the new faith as the vital energy of the root and the stem is to the vitality of each and every limb of the tree. The ages and their annals afford no other spectacle as preposterously unique as the treatment of the Synagogue by the inconsistent Church, who, worshiping a Jew, tortured his race; feeding on Jewish brains, bruised the Jewish head; deifying the supposed son of God, belittled God Himself; building on

Prophecy, rejected the Divine Law; in short, raising a giant superstructure, while undermining its foundation. Infinitely more harmonious with the rise of Judaism are its own growth and development. On the Divine Law Prophecy and the vast edifice of Hebrew literature, Biblical and post-Biblical, is founded. Attention has been drawn elsewhere to the spirit of Hebrew Prophecy, poetry, and tradition. We propose to conclude this chapter with a few words on that criminal jurisprudence which was the necessary evolution of the Divine Law.

With the picture of our court and its jury—often constituted of twelve illiterate men—before us, we may profitably summon the great Jewish assembly, the *Sanhedrin*, to meet, in order to form an idea of their peculiar ways and methods in serious cases. In the first place, only men of dignity and wisdom were eligible to a seat in that august senate.<sup>47</sup> As no criminal could be arraigned and judged without two ocular witnesses, and as the verdict entirely depended on the given testimony, the criminal code of Judaism attached the greatest and gravest importance to the nature and treatment of witnesses. Thus, no one could mount the stand as a witness or an accuser before he had warned the guilty against the nature of the crime and the penalty it was sure to bring, and not until he had himself seen the crime perpetrated. The fact alone was of account; circumstantial evidence was out of question. The first step of the court was to make the witness feel the enormous weight of his responsibility. The blood of innocence would be on his head should it be shed by inaccurate or false testimony. If he had the slightest doubt about the accuracy of facts his testimony was void. It was not enough to have seen a man run after another, a deadly weapon in hand, then see the murderer return from the house, the weapon reeking with the blood of the victim found therein. If the witness saw nothing else but one man fleeing away, the other following, a bloody steel and the fugitive slain, but did not see the act of murder, his testimony amounted to nothing. The *Sanhedrin* was in dread of bloodshed. The current view was, that

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<sup>47</sup> אין מושיבין בסנהדרין אלא בעלי קומה, חכמה וכו'.

a *Sanhedrin* is sanguinary who had one execution in seven years. Another view is, that no execution should happen in seventy years, while two great lights of the Law expressed themselves, that, had they been in that great assembly, there would have never been an execution.<sup>48</sup>

Every advantage was granted to the accused; every disadvantage stood in the way of the accuser. In the consultations of the great court no voice given in favor of acquittal could be retracted, but every vote against the criminal could be repealed. A hasty verdict of "guilty" amounted to an acquittal. Self-accusation was not listened to, but self-defense met with the gravest consideration. Extenuating evidence came never too late, not to the last second fixed for the execution. Before the execution took place a herald preceded the condemned, inviting any and every body who had aught to say in favor of acquittal to come forth and be heard. A horseman, flag in hand, stood at the portal of the court, ready to stop the procession to death at a moment's notice, should anything transpire for the benefit of the guilty. It was a sacred principle in Israel's jurisprudence to choose the mildest, most painless form of execution. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" meant, among other things, our wise taught, to let the guilty die without pain.<sup>49</sup> The whole assembly tasted no food nor drink on the day on which they saw and judged a murderer.<sup>50</sup> An intoxicating drink was prepared by good women to dull the sense of dread and the agonies of death in him whose crime was beyond doubt.<sup>51</sup> You could as well bribe the sun as corrupt the verdict of a Jewish court. Such a case was never heard of in Israel. It is not generally known that, except in criminal cases, about five millions of Jews are still depending for justice on that hoary jurisprudence in preference to any other in which experience taught them to repose small confidence, especially in lands where judicial bribery is not an unusual occurrence. In every Jewish congregation in Russia, Roumania, Galicia, Turkey, Morocco, Tunis, and elsewhere, where non-

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<sup>48</sup> רבי טרפון ור' עקיבא אומרים אלו היינו בסנהדרין לא נהרג אדם מעולם.  
<sup>49</sup> ואהבת לרעך כמוך ברור לו מיתה יפה. <sup>50</sup> סנהדרין שראו בא' שהרג הנפש  
<sup>51</sup> אין טועמין כל אותו היום. <sup>51</sup> היוצא ליהרג משקין אותו קורט של לבונה.

Jewish justice is for the highest bidder, there is a local tribunal called the *Beth-Din*, usually constituted of three learned Hebrews whose integrity nobody thinks of questioning. Nor is it a rare sight to see Christians of station and intelligence resort to those Semitic courts, where the balance of justice never inclines toward him who bears the heaviest coin.

Our God-reality and our Divine Law guard the Jewish court, the Jewish heart, the home, and the faith from idolatrous contamination.





## CHAPTER XII.

### OUR ETHICAL REALITIES.

THE generally current maxim of *vox populi vox Dei* has never been accepted by Israel without strict limitations, especially in matters of truth and conscience. The one who sees what the world fails to see is more than the whole world in this particular distinction; and the principle of judging things in general by their intrinsic quality, not by quantity, is the one by which the divine in man will ultimately be tested. Truth knows no numbers, minorities, or majorities; facts are the symbols of truth, which no Olympian thunder can silence or refute. "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?" asks Macbeth. "No; this my hand will rather the multitudinous sea incarnadine, making the green one red." What happened, happened; what is true, no power above or below can change. If it rained this morning, can the Almighty Himself change the fact? Galileo having proved his theory of this globe's rotation, all the popes are impotent to disprove it. As in international intercourse the paper value of currency indicates the moral credit of the respective land, so does the current unbiased view of a people's ethics indicate the estimation at which its religion is held. Now, you claim that Christian morality is superior to all other morality; you claim, in the language of Strauss, that Jesus is "the highest object we can *possibly imagine* with respect to religion, the being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible;" or, as Renan expresses it, that "he is the most beautiful incarnation of God in the most beautiful of forms; his beauty is eternal; his reign will never end." Suppose we deny it as articulate wind, contradicted by the same lips that uttered those cheap generalities, and ask for facts to sustain words, what will you do? That same Renan exclaims:

"Ah, me ! eighteen long centuries will have to pass before his blood shall bear fruit. Thinkers as noble as he was will during that period be subjected to torture and death. Even now penalties are being imposed in so-called Christian lands for religious dissensions. Jesus is not responsible for these aberrations. He could not foresee that many a people of morbid imagination would turn him into a hideous Moloch who longs for human flesh. Christendom has been intolerant, but its intolerance is not an essentially Christian but a Jewish fact." True, save the last line, which shall stand here unrefuted as a survival of that Apion spirit who, seeing his gods tumble, gratified his envy by maligning a race whose God could neither be overthrown nor crucified. Renan is, in this respect, not as guilty of hypocrisy as those eulogists of Judaism whose encomiums are like Milton's picture of Sin sitting at the gate of hell : "Woman to the waist, and fair, but ended foul in many a scaly fold, voluminous and vast, a serpent armed with mortal sting." But Renan's "Ah, me !" means : "*Christianity is thus far a failure.*"

We do most emphatically deny it that the Church ever formed an ethical code of her own superior, or even equal, to the original system of ethics as embodied in our Divine Law and its commentaries. We furthermore asseverate that ethical Judaism is vastly superior to ethical Christianity, which stands convicted of pluming itself with feathers borrowed of that eagle whom, in his Godward flight, it vainly tries to outwing. Besides what has been said in the preceding chapter in confirmation of this asseveration we are prepared to strengthen our position by advancing a few additional irrefutable facts. Nothing easier than this. Renan himself admits—and he stands not alone in his sorrowful admission—that as a religion of justice, love, and mercy, the one based on the New Testament is, so far, a signal failure, having accepted Jesus in theory and turned him into a "hideous Moloch" in practice. But the founder of Judaism has not been as unfortunate as to be so monstrously misrepresented. The most rigid lines in Mosaicism were softened down by a humane prophecy and a philanthropic philosophy. Our ethical realism is so venerably old,

is a quarry so characteristically Jewish and original, that any plagiarist who attempts to transplant a stone thereof, for the benefit of some unheavenly scheme, will let it appear in the light of a polished onyx block planted in a wall of mud. Like nature's beneficent gifts, our Divine Law and Prophecy are intended for all mankind. Like nature, they admit of imitation, of distortion, and adoption; but they admit of no substitution.

Whereas we are willing to do justice to the ethical beauties of Christianity, recognizing that even in its heathenized condition it had, and has, a mission, a great mission, we are constrained to maintain what Lessing, returning a manuscript to a young author, observed: "What is good therein is not new, and what is new therein is not good." A Talmudical allegory tells how the Lord punished the envy of the moon, which, jealous of the sun's effulgence, exclaimed: "Why do two lords occupy one throne? Why should I not be the first?" The Lord withdrew His golden rays; jealousy paled the moon's splendor, and there she soars with her lustre withered.<sup>52</sup> How would the off-shoots of Judaism fare had they to yield to the challenge of returning "to Cæsar what is Cæsar's"? Suppose we admit that the transferring of evil spirits from two lunatics into two thousand swine, and that the tempting of Jesus by Satan, as well as all other amazing miracles, are of a New Testament originality, does this imply the disowning of our claim to have taught and *practiced* the golden rule prior to the Herodian period? It is on points like these that Judaism takes issue with its overweening daughter creeds. If we allow the miracles of the New Testament and the Koran to pass as original, we are in no sense bound to allow our precious materials in the Sermon on the Mount, or in Mohammed's vision, to continue unrecognized. If you are to "give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's" is it not our sacred obligation to restore to Jehovah what is Jehovah's? We are happy to have supplied the adamantine blocks for the reconstruction of the world's ethics—for the elevation of humanity to divinity; all that we

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<sup>52</sup> See first allegory of Appendix.

are working and waiting for is Israel's recognition as the only true expounder of the Divine Law, and as the champion of the One God.

The object of these pages being mainly to exhibit the splendid features of our ethical realism, allusions to kindred or tributary systems will merely occur incidentally and by way of comparison. Full knowledge of animal anatomy renders vivisection superfluous. Our case is one in which a statement often serves the end of an argument. In theory, our ethical realism dates back to the infancy of man; in practice, it extends from the noblest ethical career of our ancient patriarch—*whose life is something more than a myth*—down to our late centenarian philanthropist, Montefiore, who, as Abraham, was the true type of the earliest Hebrew, died, the ideal of the modern humanitarian Jew. This type has been made hereditary in Israel by the acceptance of and the compliance with the ethical teachings of the Divine Law, and its wise interpretations in Prophecy and in subsequent literature. Mosaism sums up in substance all ethical codes of antiquity and rises as high above them as heaven is above earth. Reverence for the loftiest intuitions in the human soul inspires us with profound veneration for him who is by far the wisest of the Orient's earlier lights. Buddha, after years of inward search and meditation, evolved an ethical system admirable in conception, self-sacrificing, humane in realization. The dreamer of *Nirvana* was one of mankind's greatest. Such an effort to be guided by the "Enlightened One," to banish all evil, impure desires from the human heart, planting universal kindness and charity in their stead; love "good-will without measure toward all being;" where, beyond Buddhism, do you, among Indo-Europeans, hear of it again? Even Platonism reaches not up to this lofty height. Yet here, as elsewhere, the Aryan is given to the gloomiest contemplations of earthly life, which is to the "Light of Asia" a mystery—of sorrow, since misery and vexation of the spirit do, in his judgment, always accompany human existence, and the way to salvation is assured by the total suppression of all wishes and passions.

Such is not the spirit of the Divine Law. Its explicit end



is to make man happy, this world an abode of peace, kindness, love, mercy—even to animals—charity to all, and ethical purity. Our ethical *Nirvana* finds expression in five Hebrew words which, translated, read, "Perfect shalt thou be with the Lord thy God."<sup>53</sup> The ethical demand of the Divine Law is nothing less than human perfection. Jesus and Mohammed are satisfied with less than this. Both promise not the virtuous, but the faithful, perfect absolution of all sins and paradise withal. In Judaism *perfection* is insisted upon, to be acquired by a stringent watch over self, by control, not suppression, of human nature, such as subduing the feelings of greed, hatred, envy, malice, lust, and vengeance, and by substituting therefor the sentiments of love, truthful, charitable, and righteous dealing with everybody. "If thou see thy enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt bring it back to him again." The Hebrew has often done this. How often did the Christian offer his left cheek to him who struck his right? Preposterous command! We would be satisfied had the Church not dealt five blows for one, or for none.

"Thou shalt not follow the majority in doing evil," even if the evil contributes to the "greatest happiness of the greatest number." "Ye shall be holy, for I, the Eternal, Am Holy."—"Ye shall not steal—neither shall ye deny—property in your hand—nor lie one to another."—"Thou shalt not withhold property from thy neighbor, nor rob him; there shall not abide with thee the wages of him that is hired to the next morning; thou shalt not curse the deaf nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but thou shalt be afraid of thy God."—"Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people; thou shalt not stand—indifferently—by the blood of thy neighbor."—"Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, I Am the Lord." When the servant is dismissed, he is to be supplied by his master with a liberal portion of his wealth. Reverence for age is enjoined, unconditional submission to the parental will, liberality to the poor and the helpless, perfect tolerance and friendly treatment of

<sup>53</sup> תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך.

the stranger, above all, absolute justice, just weight and full measure, frankness, sincerity, respect of human dignity are the distinguished, glorious principles of our Divine Law. Domestic chastity is treated with the utmost care and minute detail; the food of the Hebrew is to be the cleanest; the word of his lip, the thought of his soul, the purest; the most sacred intimacy of husband and wife is an object of ethical solicitude. Nothing that concerns the bodily and spiritual welfare of the Israelite escapes the attention of the Divine Law, which, it is plainly stated, has been revealed, in order "that you may live thereby," all virtue and purity being calculated to lead to happiness and perfection.

Such being the ethical nature of the old faith, one is tempted to ask, what the Church and the Mosque added thereunto, improved thereupon, unless it be the barbarous doctrine that extols ignorance above wisdom? "Blessed are they who are *poor in spirit*." The votaries of Judaism pray that they may never be visited with that kind of *blessing*. From time immemorial it has been the glory of Israel to wipe out ignorance, and to raise generation after generation *rich in spirit*. The wisest of Scriptural thinkers urge Israel to search for wisdom, which is more precious than jewels. Wisdom was the petition of Solomon, the quest of Job, the longing of David, the highest goal of our sages and prophets. Jewish ethics presuppose knowledge. That "the ignorant man cannot be pious" is an ancient saying with our wise, fully confirmed by daily experience, because Judaism exacts more of its representatives than blind faith. Judaism sees in ignorance a curse and a misfortune, and commands a prudent distance to be kept between the learned and the illiterate. The Revealed Law was not intended to be blindly believed, but to be studied, understood, amplified, and wisely applied to all conditions and circumstances; and its assimilative adaptability to all times is evident from its unexcelled provisions calculated to meet the requirements of the most civilized ages, and keeping much in reserve to be utilized by times to come, perchance, yet much in advance of those we are calling progressive.

A separation between the ethical, juridical, and spiritual

was, in ancient Israel, never attempted, all three aspects being focused in the Divine Law and Prophecy, and finding further development in post-Biblical schools. "Let those who would make Christianity merely a religious system apart from the common life of men, and who look at religion as a merely individual connection with God, see to it that they do not fall below the Hebrew ideal," says Canon Freemantle; and he continues to maintain that "those who appreciate that ideal most fully, and dwell most on the Divine element pervading it, will see that it points to an all-embracing society, including the whole range of human interest, and binding all men and classes and nations together in true relations, which are the work and expression of the Spirit of God." In addition to this statement it is in order to quote a few lines from another divine, the Bishop of Peterborough, who, speaking on socialism, remarked that Christianity made no claim to rearrange the economic relations of men in the state and in society; and he hoped to be understood when he plainly said that it was his firm belief that any Christian state, carrying out in all its relations the Sermon on the Mount, could not exist for a week. The two leading principles taught were non-resistance and forgiveness of injuries. It would not be possible for a state to forgive all injuries, or to forgive all criminals. Neither could the English Government, in the event of a French army landing on our shores, afford to give that army a safe escort to London. It was perfectly clear that a state could not continue to exist upon what were commonly called Christian principles, and it was a mistake to attempt to turn Christ's Kingdom into one of this world. To introduce the principles of Christianity into the laws of the state would lead to absolute intolerance.—Summed up in a word, it means that Christianity cannot be reconciled with the rudiments of justice and human equality. Carried to its ultimate conclusion, it means that Judaism is a religion of life, and Christianity one of death. You can be a good Jew, and love your neighbor and the stranger; but to be a good orthodox Christian you are bound either to convert or to despise and ill-treat your neighbor, or to act like an idiot by giving your cheek to be struck, and punish no crime.

When the ethical side of our supplementary literature is examined, it is found to be a scrupulous amplification of the ethical spirit of the Divine Law. Gathered from the vast maze of traditional literature, and shaped in the form of a purely ethical work, are the "Ethics of the Fathers," gems of moral philosophy, every phrase furnishing a text for an ethical discourse. That ethical treatise opens with the statement that Moses, having received the Law on Sinai, had delivered it to Joshua, who transmitted it to the Elders, Judges, priests, who, in turn, delivered it to the Great Assembly. This Assembly laid down the following three great principles, which ought to cause many a modern sage and law-giver to stop and think: "Be careful in legal decisions, multiply the number of students, and raise a bulwark around the Law." Simeon the Just teaches that "*the study of the Law, Divine reverence, and good works* sustain the world." Another teacher insists that man must not worship God with the view of securing a reward, but out of unselfish motives, which, in modern phraseology, would be termed, "Virtue should be her own reward." Other veins of genuine beauty run through the following sayings: "Let thy house be the gathering-place of the wise; sit at their feet, and drink in their words.—Open thy house freely; make it the home of the poor.—Live under the guidance of a superior mind, a teacher; court a true friend, and look at the brighter side of every man's character.—Keep aloof from a bad neighbor; shun the company of the wicked, and be not unprepared for adversity.—Love work; hate office; intrude not among the ambitious." Hillel says: "*Love peace, pursue it; love mankind, and spread knowledge broadcast among them.*—He who hunts fame will lose his name.—He who learns not retrogresses.—He who disdains wisdom deserves not to live. He who parades wisdom as a diadem of vanity will fall.—If I think not of self, who will think of me? Should I think but of self of what use am I? And if naught be done to-day, when then?—*Further the interests of the public; doubt your self-trust; judge not of others too severely before being similarly tried*: say not a thing cannot be learned which you may learn anyhow; say not 'I shall perfect myself,' you may have

no chance to do so.—The unprincipled fears no sin; the ignorant cannot be pious; the bashful cannot learn; and the hot-tempered cannot teach.—Not everybody who deals in wares wins wisdom.—Where there is lack of manhood show thyself a man.—The more flesh the more food for worms; the more wealth the more cares; the more wisdom the more ideal life; the more study the more wisdom; the more thought the more insight; the more beneficence the more salvation.—A good name is the best thing for man; he who lives faithful to the Law lives forever.” Seeing a skull float in the water, Hillel exclaimed: “Because of thy having drowned others thou art drowned thyself; and they who drowned thee shall be themselves drowned.”

Hie thee to rearward with your Sermon on the Mount! Shammnai said: “Fix a time for study; be *small in promise, great in action, and meet friendly every man.*” Rabbi Simeon, son of Gamliel, used to teach: “All my life did I spend among the wise, and I found nothing healthier than silence; not the thought alone but the deed is essential; much talk engenders error.—*On three virtues does the world rest—on TRUTH, on JUSTICE, and on PEACE.*”

But we are here in the magic storehouse of Aladdin, and are embarrassed as to the choice of inestimable treasure. Rabbi Jochanon enjoins: “*Be not conceited of acquired knowledge; thou art here for no other purpose.*—Which is the best virtue for man to acquire?” asked he once of his five pupils. “An unenvious eye,” said the one; “a loyal friend,” said the other; “a good neighbor,” thought the third; “the power to foresee future events,” said the fourth; “*a good heart,*” said the last. The master deemed “a good heart” the best quality, for it comprised all other good qualities, thought he. And who could plausibly disagree with this hoary sage in Israel? “*Be the honor of thy fellow-man dear to thee as thy own*; be not impatient, and repent of your sins on the last day of your life,” remarked Rabbi Eliazar. “*A jealous eye, impure greed, and human hatred shorten the life of man.*” Rabbi José said: “Thy fellow’s property be dear to thee as thy own, endeavor to study the law of which the knowledge is not hereditary, and *in all*



*thy dealings be thy goal the highest.*" Rabbi Tarphon: "The day is short, the work is great, the workers are sluggish, the reward is immense, and the Master presses. Not thine is the task to do all the work, but thou art not relieved of thy share therein. Much wisdom brings due reward; sure is thy Master to reward thee according to thy merit; but know *that the reward of the righteous is in the world to come.*" In the same spirit was this saying uttered: "*This world is the vestibule of the hereafter; prepare in the vestibule, so that thou mayest be received in the palace proper.*" Judaism is thus not without its heavenly kingdom, and as these sayings are older than Christianity, what remains for us to conclude?

Grand ethical principles are imparted in the following lines by rabbis of the highest authority: "Contemplate these three points, and sin will lose all her power over thee; know *whence thou comest; whither thou goest; and before whom thou art bound to give account of self.*—Pray for the prosperity of the ruling government, for, but for the awe it inspires, man would devour his fellow.—*Only knowledge coupled with virtue will flourish.* He who is unloved of man is unloved of God.—*The distinction of man is to have been created in the image of God: but a greater distinction is to be fully conscious thereof.*—Everything is seen; *man has free choice; the world is judged with mercy; much depends on the amount of good done.*—Where the Divine Law is unheeded there is no benevolence practiced.—*Where there is lack of wisdom there is no fear of God.*—No bread, no culture; no culture, no bread.—He whose knowledge outweighs his righteousness resembles a tree of roots too weak to support its boughs; the first gale will uproot it; but armed in virtue, no storm in the world can shake him." Here are indeed "Jewish Realities."

— This must answer our purpose. Our mines are verily inexhaustible, and it were a vain effort to exhibit all our uncoined bullion. This modest display of specie current in the Jewish home and school will convey a fair idea of the precious metals it has been coined of. Jesus was not heard of when many of these were already living principles in Israel; and we are being urged to derive spiritual inspiration and ethical enlighten-

ment from the few distorted Jewish ideas expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, or in the apocryphal gospels. Devoted to wisdom, and striving for prosperity and happiness, we are expected to subscribe to ignorance and curse the thinking, the wealthy, and the happy. The founder of Christianity assures us that "it is easier for the camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." And those mad curses of Lucas: "Woe betide the rich! woe to the well-fed! woe to the laughing! woe to you for whom every one has a kind word!" Such curses are abominable to the ethical sanity of Israel, who prays for enlightenment, wealth, and happiness, and favors joyous laughter, as God's precious blessing, keeping man good-humored, thus accessible and open to the noblest of virtues—charity and humanity. "Poverty is worse than fifty blows," say our sages; and "inspiration is only granted to the wise and good-humored." Another Talmudical passage maintains, that "*the poorest is he who is poor in spirit; having no reason, what hast thou? having this, what lacketh thee?*"<sup>54</sup>

Our ethical realism and its actualization are as phenomenal as the giving of the Law amidst the thunders of Sinai. Renan was not the first to discover the fact that Israel is not a religious power only, though it stood and stands as such as the ideal of humanity. Judaism was ever conscious of its social and moral, not less than of its spiritual, mission, all three being so intimately interlaced that it is impossible to see where the one begins and where the other ends. Throughout our vast literature the student is astonished to find infinitely more solicitude displayed about the righteous relations of man to man, than those of man to God. The Day of Atonement cleanses man of his sins against God, but not of his wrongs against his fellow-man, until every wrong has been righted and the wound healed. The Church never ceased to grace herself with Jewish glories, claiming them as her own, and when the Jew raised his timid voice in protest he was argued down with the rod or the torch. Deprived of these the

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<sup>54</sup> אין עני אלא ברעה. רעה חכרה מה קניה? רעה קניה מה חכרה?

situation of the Church grows critical, and her spiritual prospects are anything but cheerful.

Perhaps nothing is so false as the claim of Christianity to have raised woman to the place which is legitimately hers. The very reverse of this claim is historically established. From the age of Sarah, the honored consort of the first great Hebrew, to the age of Judith Montefiore, woman in Israel was the sacred Vestal, revered at the Jewish home, the soul and centre of the Jewish family. Our Proverbs glorify woman, declaring the virtuous housewife the most precious of God's jewels. It were superfluous to refer to our Deborahs, Hannahs, Esthers, Huldahs, and Miriams, who played such a mighty part in shaping the destinies of their people, and we have sufficiently indicated the place post-Biblical lore assigns to womanhood. When Koheleth asserts to have found one good man among a thousand, but not a good woman, man's moral superiority is not very seriously emphasized. But how did for centuries Christianity treat the mother of mankind? Paul would have her locked in a chicken-coop. To Tertullian's saintly mind she is the "devil's gateway." Clement, of Alexandria, reached the conclusion that woman must blush "even to reflect of what nature she is," while Gregory Thaumaturgus assures us that "a person may find one man chaste among a thousand, but a woman never." His saintship must have had curious experiences as regards man's and woman's chastity.

"What the early Christian did," said Dr. Donaldson, recently, in the *Contemporary Review*, "was to strike the *male* out of the definition of man, and *human being* out of the definition of woman. \* \* \* She was on the earth to inflame the heart of man with every evil passion." Her company secured by marriage was deemed a pollution to the holy ministers of the Church. Children were considered one of the smallest blessings, and family life not a state to be desired, for "the cleric would rise to the throne of heaven only on the wings of virginity," is the assurance of Church ethics. What the "virginity" of the cleric implied, we all know at this date. Such a religion ought to be transferred to the dead moon, where it were in perfect harmony with the dismal surroundings. For

this living world which invites man to eat, drink, sing, laugh, think, do good, be wise, worship, hope, rejoice, live and let live, Judaism is the only universally acceptable faith. The sweetest human sympathies and affections are at home with the Jew, whose greatest happiness and success in life are to see a large, noble family rise and prosper under his loving auspices. Dr. Donaldson continues: "During this period there is a striking absence of home life in the history of Christians. No son succeeds his father; no wife comforts the weary student; no daughter soothes the sorrows of the aged bishop. Perhaps this absence of domestic affection, this deficiency in healthy and vigorous offsprings, this homelessness may account in some degree for the striking features of the next century, and especially the *prevalent hardness of heart*." Perhaps! That period, and many periods after that, were Hecate's black cycles of vice and crime, a truly Messianic era of love and peace, during which prominent among the sacred studies of the holy men was the subject, "how every heretic should be put to death in this life, and tortured eternally in the world to come." Judaism blushes to claim motherhood of so monstrous a birth; but things have changed of late, especially since the Ecclesia had her venom extracted and her stings dulled.

Israel's Divine Constitution placed him beyond the necessity of borrowing ethical principles from any philosophical system, old or new. Its definition of good and evil, right and wrong, true and false, things eternal and things perishable, is final. The "seven wise" of ancient Greece bequeathed us little indeed that could be compared with Mosaic ethics. "Know thyself," and "Exaggerate nothing" is not the sum of all wisdom, since one may know himself and be accurate in all things, yet be a rogue of the first grade. Socrates is painfully looking for the *good* and the *true*, continuing doubtful as to the "finest of goods," a doubt our ethics know not of. Our Divine Law is, in itself, the perfect knowledge of the perfect good. All we have to do is to comply with its principles. Pagan and Christian ethics fall far below those sublime precepts enjoined in the Divine Law, where man is required to do good because it is good, and for no other reason. "Love God

with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." "*The real Jew is he who does the will of his Creator because of loving Him,*" is a leading ethical rule in Judaism. The next rule is, "works," not mere "faith," are to test man's ethical quality. In modern ethical philosophy we find nothing but a rehash of Jewish ethics. More says: "If it be good that one man should be supplied with the means of living well and happy, it is mathematically certain that it is doubly good that two should be supplied, and so on." The *general good* and happiness is the highest goal of our ethical code. When the same authority maintains that "ethics is the art of living well and happy," and that true happiness lies in "the pleasure which the soul derives from the sense of virtue," he simply repeats an old Jewish principle, that good works ought to spring from love of God, and not from fear of punishment. "The idea of a Supreme Being," says Locke, "infinite in power, goodness, and wisdom, whose workmanship we are, and upon whom we depend, and the idea of ourselves as understanding, rational beings, being such as are clear in us, would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued, afford such foundations of our duty and rules of action, as might place morality among the sciences capable of demonstration, wherein, I doubt not, but from self-evident propositions, by necessary consequences as incontestable as in mathematics, the measure of right and wrong might be made out." Locke could, in this respect, learn at the feet of Philo. To the Jewish thinker, the Supreme Being is not an idea but a reality, and His Law of right and wrong is the immutable ethical law.

Our limited space gives us no latitude to enter into further details as to the relation of modern moral philosophy to ethical Judaism. A survey of the best ethical systems extant leads us to the conviction that they are all an imperfect scientific generalization of those revealed and inspired ethical doctrines which are of a hoary antiquity in Israel. As grammar is the science that methodizes speech and subjects it to certain rules, so is moral philosophy but a methodizing effort engaged in systematizing what is intuitively a developed, ever-growing power, a power all-permeating, supreme, and indigenous in



the Jewish heart. It was a Jewish thinker who taught that reason is identical with revelation in so far as it slowly and by sinuous ways reaches tardily what revelation anticipates. If it be not our merit, it is certainly our distinction granted by Divine Grace to possess what is indispensable to the bodily and spiritual well-being of all our fellow-men. In our Divine Law and its concurrent literature there is the unsealed *Zemzem* well of living truth, ethical and spiritual. The proof of its truth lies in the fact of Israel's moral vitality. Nothing short of Providential Guardianship underlies *Jeshurun's* preservation. Ethically imbued with that self-sacrificing virtue which sets principle above everything else, our fathers, even in the land of the foe, lived inwardly resigned, self-contented, hopeful, aye, happy in adversity, happy in their consciousness of a divine heroism; above all, happy in the ethical works of a faith the ultimate end of which is to alleviate human suffering and sorrow, and to unite all men on the principle of perfect equality. No social condition, however humble, relieves the Jew of ethical duties toward his brother. "Even he who depends on benevolence must be charitable," is a Jewish saying worthy of notice.

Acting on this principle the homeless, wandering Jew dispenses a mite of his mite to dry the tear and allay the hunger of the unfortunate. His house *was* and is the home of the poor. Over his wife and children he bends with consecrated love, his tearful blessings dropping as the dew of heaven, conscious of sweet sorrow, a martyr to an ideal. What we say here of the Israelite in exile, many others know as well; but we have seen him in different climes, under various, often unsupportable, circumstances, yet never shrinking as often as conviction imposed self-sacrifice. We have seen the poor Jew divide his crust of bread with the hungry; give of the small means he had for the benefit of those who dwell in the Holy Land. We have seen him implore the forgiveness of him he had injured and humbly offering redress, obeying the prompting of no other but the ethical quality. An aged father cuffing publicly a son advanced in years in the presence of his children, is a sight we remember, and see in spirit the filial

son of Israel smile submissively, without uttering a word; a scene not exactly æsthetical yet ethical in the highest degree. And we have seen in lands of barbarous oppression the Jew raise hospitals for Jew and Gentile, and pray for a government and a people who have left no scheme untried to reduce him to abject misery. Crucified not once but a hundred times, and bleeding from many a wound, the actual living Jew, not the mythical Jesus, has exclaimed time and again: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do;" they, one-half of whom "worship a Jewess, and the other half a Jew."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### A VIEW OF JESUS; OUR SPIRITUAL REALITIES.

AN ancient writer on fine architecture exacts of that art the three elements of stability, of utility, and beauty. Modern authors, who have given us their views on the same art, enlarge and qualify the number of conditions on which the secret of architectural grandeur depends; they speak of size, proportion, harmony, symmetry, ornament, and color. The builder of the Egyptian pyramid, of the Grecian temple, of the Gothic cathedral, and the colossal structures of Stonehenge, in order to impress one with a sense of pleasure, had, in a measure, to comply with those elemental rules. Had he succeeded in fully satisfying the requirements of the art, he should have reached the ideal of perfect beauty and grandeur. Except size, the conditions which govern stability, utility, and beauty in the domain of the moral and spiritual appear to be very much the same. Size devoid of those æsthetic elements is not alone undelightful but even repugnant, as is proved by the remarkable impression one receives at the sight of the huge elephant by the side of the beautifully proportioned, symmetrical, and spirited race horse. The claims and truth of spiritual might are likewise to be tested by its harmonious, symmetrical consistency, say, by the proportion its real endeavors and successes bear to its ideal pretensions. Religion must take cognizance of the science of æsthetics, since, in her practical application, she has not alone to realize the truthful and the sublime, but should never offend the sense of the beautiful; above all, shun as pestilence the incongruous and the ludicrous. Assumed superiority may long resist the most earnest of protests, but, growing incongruous, it pales and withers at the sound of laughter. Ridicule is the deadly annihilating Nemesis of falsehood. They in Japan once persuaded

the Mikado that, while he was sitting on his throne, the globe was in danger should he stir. To prevent the universal catastrophe the royal dupe used to sit for hours as deadly still as an idol. The world could not help laughing, and the laughter killed the Mikado. Frederick the Great was less afraid of three armies than of Voltaire's laughter, and the Jansenists and Jesuits had good reason to hate Luther much less than Molière's *Tartuffe*. The pensive owl is dangerous enough to such as are in dread of thought and light, since, wherever they hide, there is no telling but the owl may be there as well, and know all about it. But the owl is Jupiter's bird compared with the loud-talking and laughing parrot. Truth is always equal to self. Falsehood is compelled ever to be on the alert, to study words and miens, and to cut figures to suit her ends, conscious all the while of instability and incongruity.

The fatal flaw of orthodox Christianity is flagrant incongruity. Its very founder or founders appear inconsistent in word and deed. Jesus claims to be the Messiah, the "prince of peace," and his peaceful mission on earth is announced in these words: "Think not that I came to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but the sword." And elsewhere he emphasizes his mission by saying: "I am come to arouse man against his father, the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." Warning his followers not to transgress the smallest ordinance of Mosaism—"He who repeals one of these smallest commandments and thus teaches the people, will be the smallest in the kingdom of heaven"—he himself breaks the Sabbath, which is one of the Ten Commandments. These are stumbling-blocks in the way of sincere research. Mohammed justifies some of his shortcomings as being his special privilege as a prophet: so does Jesus claim to be "lord of the Sabbath" *to break it*. It was a Talmudical saying that "the Sabbath was given to you, not you to the Sabbath," which, however, does not imply violation of the Divinely Consecrated Day, but mental and physical ease, rest, and peace. Yet even the desecration of the Sabbath by Jesus did not justify its substi-

tution by Sunday, which was a rather late afterthought of paganized Christianity. Springing from the purest of sources, the new faith spread and ramified like a wild inundation to every quarter of the compass, gathering in its bed all the impurities of heathen fetichism from the Egyptian triad down to the worship of bloody Moloch. The inconsistency of the Church is not merely unæsthetic, but grimly ironical.

We will not, like the anti-Semite, dip our pen in venom and bespatter a great power because of our disagreement with its doctrines, means, and methods. Right here we most sincerely and truthfully assure our readers that we humanely love all our good fellow-men who happen to be Christians. May that liberal Christianity prosper that is Christian in the highest and noblest acceptance of that term, working for human love, peace, and happiness. We know that there have been humane, generous popes, in whom the feelings of humanity triumphed over a barbarous doctrine. Moreover, there is at this moment an enlightened Christianity rising into fame for whom Israel has a cordial welcome, a brotherly love. Writing these lines in the heart of a city wherein at this moment over a hundred and fifty thousand homes are radiating with the festal beauties of an almost universal joy, having been preceded by universal work and profit, we cannot but rejoice at so much benefit and happiness accruing to mankind from a creed which, had it not been polluted, we would bless as a wayward, yet not unworthy, scion of a purer parent. But with each of these Christian festivals there are in the mind of Israel horrid scenes of outrage and massacre associated, over which we would readily draw a curtain were they a matter of the remote past. Anti-Semitism reminds us that the *Evangelical messengers of peace* are yet at large, and, though hopelessly crippled, are up and doing their very best or, say, their very worst. This is the class we are bound to brand as the devil's messengers, who deceive the world by their honeyed lies, and poison its peace by the venom they instill into the unguarded mind of Christian youth and credulity. Christian and Jew ought to know and stigmatize that class as the enemies of peace, and make them the butt of scorn, the object of pity and contempt.



Robert Browning is honored with a grave among the choicest sons who made England glorious and the world a good deal wiser and better, and of him the editor of the *Western Watchman*, a Catholic priest of the mediæval type, has the following to say: "Robert Browning, the greatest genius of the century, according to many, and a poet entitled to rank with Wordsworth and Goethe, in the opinion of a few, the man who sought the soul of things and not their outward integument, who neglected the form, but oh, the sense, ye gods! the weighty sense, died last week, and a dispute has already arisen as to whether the man was Jew or Christian. We never had much respect for poets, but we shall have less henceforward." Such are the pillars who uphold the orthodox Church.

Now, though frequent reference has been made in these pages to Christianity and its founder, a positive view of his personality may not be out of place in this chapter, and such we propose to give before drawing an outline of our spiritual realities. Strauss, Renan, and Baur have done their part in throwing a flood of light on Jesus, his apostles, and their gospels, and we had our say on these. At present we shall not stop to inquire whether or no, at the given date or a century before, there really lived such a man of such a nature, endowed with such superhuman powers as the primitive Church fathers tell of. Setting aside the question of the record's veracity and the gospel's authenticity as far as the supernatural elements therein are concerned, there remains no plausible reason for doubting the individuality of the man who gave rise to the Christian religion; and, admitting the personality of Jesus, we are induced to see him from three different standpoints: the historical, the mythical, and the symbolical.

In the historical Jesus we see a person of a visionary genius, born at a troublous age, when the general decline of things caused Israel to expect a helper; a man powerful enough to deal with the might of all-swallowing Rome; to carry, like Judas Maccabens, Jehovah's banner to the discomfiture of the heathen gods; to rule like Sannel, Solomon, and Elijah, with the "rod of his lip." The air was full of reveries and prophecy. The times were such as "tried men's souls;" the helper

was looked and longed for ; the public mind was prepared for the extraordinary, the miraculous, the impossible. A young man of a sympathetic, responsive, enthusiastic, and generous disposition, endued with a vivid imagination, as the son of Joseph and Mary appears to have been, could catch fire at the incipieney of a conceit, and could easily persuade himself that he might be the preordained Messiah. Many before and after him were similarly afflicted, though less successful as to results, the field and conditions being less favorable. Dreams deluded him into all kinds of religious aberrations, carrying him away from the prescribed course of Jewish life, until, drifting too far, return was not easy, and the boldest course appeared the wisest. Everybody knows how, even at this date, one may found a new creed by boldly defying all authority and proclaiming a doctrine more acceptable than those in vogue.

Yet did the Messianic claim of Jesus meet with little credence even among the vulgar, for we are assured that his followers were few, and his own mother and brothers were first among the faithless, as he himself testifies by refusing to admit them to his presence. Had he not openly violated the Sabbath ; had he not proclaimed himself the "king of the Jews" at a time when Rome was jealous of her suzerainty, the whole thing would most probably have passed off as many similar vagaries before and after him. As matters stood, we assume the Jews had to take notice of his dealings and, themselves unable to mete out capital punishment, which the violation of the Sabbath and other transgressions imposed, they drew the attention of Roman authority to the doings of one who religiously and politically became a menace to the state and the people. They were in a dilemma, had to do something, and did certainly *not do the wisest thing*. Left to himself, the extravagant, contradictory claims and teachings of Jesus would have defeated his ends ; for any one who knows our Prophecy and tradition is utterly disgusted with the misquotations and perversions as the gospels reproduce them in his name. But his blood was shed. Making allowance for many exaggerations, there remains little doubt that he died a victim to popular excitement and Roman cruelty. He sustained

a martyr's death; was hooted and scorned by the mob; had a crown of thorns planted on his brow; was scourged, outraged, and crucified, all for an apparently innocent pretension. The impression such an execution under like circumstances would in our days make on the mind of the credulous, is not to be doubted. The very rabble that clamored for his execution must have turned pale on seeing the deluded victim transfixed and bleeding in agonies on the cross. Blood has done what nothing in the world could have done—it deified a man. Once buried marvelous legends clustered round his memory; everything deemed wise and best by his followers was put to his credit. He did and he said all good and wonderful things.

The times were ripe for a change. Paganism was in its expiring throes. Greece and Rome found it difficult to uphold their gods. New philosophies were undermining the last hold of polytheism. The field was vast and almost free, the chances for the spread of a new spiritual doctrine were good. In its old garb, Judaism was unpalatable, yea, repugnant, to the heathen, who was deeply prejudiced against it. In its changed dress and form it was a novelty. Converts multiplied, and as the years advanced incredible tales were accepted as matters of fact. The founder's personality was magnified, glorified, and at last deified, until the most prosaic facts were buried in a sea of myth and miracle. Thus came into being the man-god, the mythical Jesus.

This person does supernaturally arrive at this nether world. The stars and all nature announce his birth. He is born of a virgin and begotten of the Holy Ghost. As a babe he performs miracles; angels watch over him. Later on Satan tempts him. Having spent his youth among the great teachers in Israel he is raised to membership of the august *Sanhedrin*, is very learned, disputes with the greatest of his school, and is ever triumphant. He is the "son of God," "the promised Messiah," sent to redeem mankind that, since the loss of paradise, fell a prey to hell and the devil. His later career is a chain of miracles; the evil spirits are in dread of him; he transfers them from body to body, from men to swine; he

heals the sick and the leper, calls the dead to life, makes the lame walk straight, and gives sight to the blind. He feeds multitudes with the food of a few; changes water into wine; paces on the wave as on dry land; curses and blesses with immediate effect; prepares for his crucifixion; dies praying for his enemies and promising paradise to the two thieves who are crucified with him. Triumphant over death and the grave he resurrects after three days, reappears to some of his faithful pupils, and ascends, transfigured, to the skies, a prince of peace, to take his seat at the "right hand of his Father."<sup>55</sup> Such is the Jesus of the orthodox Church, a being more gracious than his Divine Father, Who would not forgive human frailty until expiated by the blood of "His only Son," a cruel, atrocious Father, it is too clear.

Thus did the Church change the loving, gracious Jehovah into a ferocious Nemesis, whose vengeance nothing but the blood of His only "Son" could appease. The spirit of sacred awe, Divine reverence, the genius of sane intellect rises in revolt against such a monstrous doctrine, such a preposterous Theosophy. Moreover, that ludicrous inconsistency of hating the ancient Jew, and heaping shame and misery on his late descendants because of his having done what had been preordained for the salvation of humanity; because he did what to propitiate a vengeful Creator had to be done. Everything, that Theosophy teaches, had been planned out beforehand, so that the crucifixion was the culmination of a beneficent scheme laid by the God-Father and His compassionate Son; and the Jews are to be punished for having done what the gods prompted them to do? Is not this punishing one for obedience, or for acting as an instrument of the Highest Will?

But the mythical Jesus and his doctrines defy all reason and logic. Blind faith, submission to the unreasonable, are the peremptory demands of the Gospels and the Koran. Never was a

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<sup>55</sup> We are here, in many regards, reminded of the Magian theosophy. The story of Zoroaster is, to a large extent, that of Jesus, God at war with Satan, filling the place of Ormuzd and Ahriman. Zoroaster spoke as soon as born, wandered about fasting in the desert, and was, likewise, tempted by Satan. We ask: Who copied of whom?

fiercer firebrand thrown into this world than when the mythical Jesus hurled His ultimatum of "*Who is not with me is against me*," which means: "No peace unless you think as I think, believe what I say, and do what I command." The sword of Mohammed proved less fatal to the peace of the world than that declaration of war on free thought and God-worship. With the mythical Jesus rises Hecate with her black crews, idolatry in all her hideousness, an infernal world of unspeakable horrors, thronged with fiends who torture erring humanity. And lest there be any doubt as to the reality of hellish torture in the beyond, to establish the "heavenly kingdom" of the mythical Jesus here myriads of human victims perished in the fires kindled by the Church of the meek "*prince of peace*;" hell-fires glowed in Christian lands; hell-tortures were inflicted in Christian prisons; hell-hatred burned in Christian hearts. If the promised paradise of the mythical Jesus required some confirmation his hell was a burning reality. The Dark Ages are the terrible nightmare conjured up on this planet by the dark worshipers of the mythical Jesus. The Aztecs tore the heart from their human victim, and all was over. The Christian tore his victim limb by limb, mutilated the martyr day after day, from motives less pure than those of the man-eating Mexicans. Ah! dwell we no more on that blood-thrilling cycle of human shame and madness. Memory burns and cannot forget what the heart has long ago forgiven.

Let us rather turn with a feeling of relief to the symbolical Jesus, who gives the name to the humane principles of enlightened Christianity. To the liberal, cultured Christian we take Jesus to be the symbol of meekness, kindness, self-sacrifice, love, and forgiveness, a veritable prince of peace. Divesting him of the supernatural and mythical, the thoughtful Christian beholds in Jesus a benefactor of his kind, endeavoring to universalize that Revelation and Prophecy which hitherto were confined to a limited quarter and a comparatively small number of the great family of erring man. His was a great mission, who, like another mythical power, stole the fire of heaven to bestow it on mankind; for, but for his heroic life and death, cycles might have passed before the knowledge of



God would "cover the earth as waters cover the sea." The best in Christianity is due to him; for its evil doings he is not responsible. Liberal Christianity does consequently advance the plausible theory that, since God utters His will and decrees through the events of history, Jesus, if not a "Son of God" in the orthodox acceptation of that word, was decidedly an extraordinary personality, Providentially ordained to do a great, aye, the greatest, work one man had ever done, a mighty instrument in the hand of the Mightiest God. "We honor not Jesus as a *son of God*; we are all sons of God," says the Unitarian; "we honor him merely as a great, good man who did a great, good work."

To this theory of the symbolical Jesus—in many respects the image of our symbolical Elijah—Judaism opposes no serious objections save that in conformity with this view there remains no ground for liberal Christianity to break any of the principal doctrines of the Old Faith, especially the Decalogue commanding the observance of the Seventh Day as the True Sabbath. Besides, Jesus being no more than a good man or a mere symbol, what meaning has Christmas or Easter to the liberal Church? What does the whole "new covenant" signify to it? If God be the Only Author of all that is, the Bestower of good and of evil, life and death, why turn to any intermediary influence for salvation? Why not let the finite soul commune with The Infinite? Early Christians considered themselves Jews in every particular except in their idea as to the Messiah. Over three centuries passed before the Church carried out the afterthought of transferring the Sabbath to Sunday. A return to original Christianity necessitates the full recognition of the Decalogue, of which the Sabbath is as essential a commandment as the worship of the One and Only God. Progress in the right direction must needs bring the liberal Church nearer the Synagogue, the question being one of time only. Granted once that Jesus was a man, the Gospels unauthentic, and the Church fathers arbitrary in their dealings with matters religious and others, Judaism remains the only safe basis for the religious man to take his stand on.

The genius of history and fact confirms us in our conviction

that Judaism points to the truest, sublimest faith, the loftiest system of ethics, the grandest of literatures ; to a philosophy in which all philosophies centre, to a record of deeds and virtues unexcelled, unequaled. Unconsciously the thinking world is paying homage to the Divine Law, expounding tardily what is therein revealed in undoubted clearness. Medical science testifies to the wholesome sanitary regulations interwoven with the ethical beauties of our Divine Law, certain mortal diseases being unknown in Israel. Study our ethics ; they are Divinely human, humanly divine. Read our Bible, read it with the soul, you will find it the Book of books, the sublime epitome of all sacred thought. Ours is the history of histories. What martyrdom equals that of Israel, he a hundred times crucified and yet alive ? Our domesticity is the purest of the pure, our Holy Days the holiest of the holy, and our God the God of gods. Who would profit should we yield ? Who will not profit yielding to us ? What you know of God we have taught you. What you know not of the soul's sweetest felicities we can teach you. Speak of heroism ! Do you know the spiritual realities of the Jew ? Prejudice blinds the eye and dulls the edge of reason. The Jew was consistent, often erring, but as often returning to his God. He allowed the enemy to take his city rather than break his Sabbath in its defense ; he gave himself up to be flayed alive or be cut to pieces rather than betray his faith ; he wandered from lands of plenty into deep misery rather than desert his God. True, we have our deserters, our disloyal, irreverent traitors ; they are the sores on Israel's healthy body, ever present, hurting but not wounding. Like all other races we have our rabble, our scum, largely engendered by long, severe persecutions. We are heartily ashamed of them, but they are not as bad as they appear ; for they have soft spots in their hearts, very sensible to the magic touch of him who knows under what spiritual influences they rose into manhood. That uncouth, seemingly rough Jew will weep like a child the moment he hears his parents named, or is reminded of his old, dear home. He at once feels his parent's hand rest blessingly on his head. A picture of felicity rises before his mental gaze. His eyes are suffused with

tears, and he is not what he seemed. Filial love and Divine reverence are his *par excellence*. He loves and worships.

An undeniable harmonious consistency marks the relation of Israel's lofty ideal dreams to his realities. Whereas Christianity confined itself to proclaiming high-sounding, unpracticable principles, Judaism carried the highest into actuality, requiring its votaries to go in juridical as well as in ethical matters beyond the limit of duty.<sup>56</sup> It is not enough that the Sabbath and the Holy Days should be observed, but they are to be lengthened by additional hours,<sup>57</sup> and wherever there was the least doubt as to the day fixed by Scripture, to make it doubly sure, another day was added. He is deemed the mightiest who fully controls his passions and "turns his enemy into a friend."<sup>58</sup> Sacred ecstasy seizes the soul of the loyal Israelite at the proclamation of THE ONE INEFFABLY HOLY. Neither the ravings of the fanatic dervish nor the lunacy of the revivalist bear any similarity to the ecstatic felicity of the Jewish worshiper, when, grasping the full bearing of his sacred mission, he, with eyes closed, a heart distended, the mind soaring in the effort to pierce the deeps of mystery, articulates the "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God! the Lord is One!" The Kabbalist trembles at the utterance of THE ONLY ONE! The love of God with all his soul, all his heart, and all his might, is to the Jew a spiritual reality for which he often endured the cruelest of tortures and deaths. Living or dying, the confession of Divine Unity is ever on the lip of Israel's true son and daughter. Jewish Holy Days are spiritual symbols instituted to strengthen the golden chain of communion between Israel and his God. Historical or otherwise, our festivals are hallowed by a sanctification unknown—we dare maintain—beyond the pale of Judaism.

A perpetual symbol of the immediate relation of the finite to the Infinite Spirit is the God-consecrated Sabbath, a gracious gift granted to Israel as a foretaste of heavenly rest and peace. Our Sabbath is intended to relax the care, toil, and

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<sup>56</sup> לפנים משורת הדין. <sup>57</sup> מוסיפין כחול יל הקודש.  
<sup>58</sup> איזו גבור כי שיעושה שונא אוהבו.

anxieties of body and mind and to double the spiritual light and delights of the soul.<sup>59</sup> The Sabbath is to be divided between bodily and mental pleasures. The study of the Law, reading of sacred poetry, singing of Psalms, and worship of The Most High are fit Sabbatic engagements; also visiting the sick and ministering to the poor and the orphan. The delights of that resting-day are to be enhanced by the best meals, the best attire, the cleanest underwear, beautiful surroundings; and the blessings of home are to be shared in by the homeless, the poor, and the stranger. Everything that tends to mar the ease of the body or disturb the peace of the mind must be avoided. Happiness and enlightenment, joy and felicity, moral and ideal, are the aim and the end of the Sabbath; ease extended to every living creature, man or animal, of the Jewish household. No sooner is Friday's sun declining than everything and everybody at the Jewish home assumes an air of rest, serenity, peace, and holiness. Spotless linen covers the table, on which there are the two sacred loaves of bread. The matronly genius presiding over the house looks very sober and solemn, spreads her hands over the lighted candles and, with closed eyes, blesses and welcomes the Sabbath, her grown daughters doing the like to right and left. The head of the house is present, and both parents lay their blessing hands on the head of each child before proceeding to welcome the bride of the Sabbath at the Synagogue, after which the happiest of eves is spent at home. There is no doubt whatsoever, that besides idealizing the environments and sentiments of the individual Israelite, the Sabbath has proved the mightiest preserver of Israel's identity, and is indeed an ineffaceable landmark, a "perpetual sign" between Judaism and its rival powers. The Sabbath is the very heart of our religious life and vitality; break this and all is doomed. There is weight in the saying of our wise, that Zion fell because of Sabbath-breaking,<sup>60</sup> since with its desecration all moral and spiritual restraints

<sup>59</sup> Such is the meaning of the נשמה יתירה.

<sup>60</sup> חרבנה ירושלים על שחללו השבת.

yielded to the low, the unholy, and the criminal. The existence of Judaism is bound up with its Sabbath.

The Feast of Passover is an eloquent reminder of an event in the world's history, which, with or without the wonders recorded, is, seen in connection with subsequent developments, calculated to impress the Jewish mind with the profoundest reverence for Divine love, justice, and retribution. It is the feast of man's universal "declaration of independence," the first unmistakable accentuation of man's individual right to be accountable to God alone as the Sovereign and Father of all. Tyranny and oppression, slavery and falsehood, are branded as crimes accursed of God. Deeply imbued with the sense of inalienable human right and liberty, Judaism sees in that Festival an eternal symbol of spiritual freedom, and commemorates the Exodus with appropriate emblems, making it a holy day of heartfelt joy, gratitude, and worship. You should see the genuine Jewish home on the first eve of Passover. If there be melancholy in your breast, or an ice-crust closing round your heart, it will thaw, melt, and vanish at the sight of so much ideal human joy radiating from every eye, beaming from the face of youth and age. It is expected that "in every age every one should act and feel as if he himself had been freed from Egypt," and this is carried out to the letter. Around a table whereon everything of beauty is effectively displayed, gathered is the family, the parents at the head, the children and strangers to right and left. There is on the table, beside the unleavened bread, the wine and the symbolical bitter herbs. The glasses are filled. All present rise to hear the father of the home open the ceremony with the benediction over the wine. A tear steals down the mother's cheek. One of her dearest is missed, either absent or dead. Ah, that mixture of joy and sorrow so characteristic of the pure Jewish home! But, as the ceremony advances, the praise of the Good, Loving, Just, and Gracious God resounds around the table and all other feelings are drowned in the one of devotion. "And this reliance on God's redeeming might braced our sires of old as it consoles us now, for not one only rose to destroy us, but age after age rose against us, yet did The Almighty save us



from the oppressor's hand." Around the world this family worship in the Jewish home has, besides a religious and historical, an educational significance; for it is purposely instituted for the benefit of the rising generation. The youthful mind is to be impressed with the grandeur of the event and the unbounded grace of Providence, so as to be armed for present and impending misery. For is not Israel still in bondage, groaning under the yoke of modern Egypt? The American, British, and French Israelite may doubt it, but he who prays in the Synagogues of Russia, Roumania, Morocco, and Persia knows too well that the Pharaohs and their task-masters are not all dead. Often has that eve been chosen by the priest-ridden rabble to bring desolation on whole congregations, who were in a moment thrown from joy into deep sorrow; so much so, that the approach of Passover has filled great Jewish communities with grave apprehension, dreading robbery and massacre on the one hand and the infernal "blood" calumny on the other. Yet, when did the Jew hesitate in the exercise of his spiritual privileges, deterred by danger or death? If I am no Jew, what am I? If there be no spirit, what is there? If the eternal and spiritual be no more than the perishable and material, what is life worth? what is it given me for? asks the Jew.

Originally a festival of harvest, when the Hebrew husbandman, having gathered in the fruit of his fields and orchards, proceeded to God's Temple to offer thanks for His blessings, Pentecost assumed in time a purely spiritual meaning, it being traditionally settled as the Day on which God revealed Himself to Israel on Mount Sinai. Occurring seven weeks after the second day of Passover it is sometimes called the "Feast of Weeks," and is very generally admitted to be the most beautiful of our Holy Days. Of late this feast has been fittingly utilized as a day of confirmation, opening the portals of Israel's fold to all those children who have passed the age of thirteen years and beyond. A joyous, spiritual solemnity is the feature of this grand feast. The congregations of the Lord rise to hear the Decalogue read from the Sacred Scroll, after which, service being over, the confirmants enter to tell

their elders what they have been taught of the beauties of the ancient faith. Tears are shed while the children are solemnly initiated into the threefold covenant that links Israel to his God.

Not less impressive is our Feast of Tabernacles, an autumn festival of hoary antiquity, having an historical and agricultural significance. During our stay in the Promised Land this used to be the feast of the ingathering of the delicious, ripe fruit, such as the citron, the olive, the fig, and the vine; it was a feast of grateful thanksgiving. But the main character this feast preserved for us lies in its historical associations and reminiscences; for it commemorates Israel's trying period spent wandering through the desert. Like Passover it makes the Jew forcibly conscious of his exceptional position among the nations of earth, he alone being able to point to such a Providentially-shaped history, such phenomenal events, such manifest protection and guidance from on High. In remembrance of that hard but salutary schooling in the wilderness, many loyal Jews partly dwell seven days in booths built for that purpose, the booths being beautified by the leaves of the palm-tree, the twig of the myrtle, the willow of the brook, and the most fragrant of the ingathered fruit. God's bounty and His never-ebbing grace for His people are to be illustrated by these symbols. Dwelling under the open, starlit Eastern sky, environed with the bountiful manifestations of Gracious Providence, and looking back on a supernaturally wrought history, the ancient Israelite must have felt wonderfully deep and spiritual; an impression which became hereditary and is shared by his latest descendants, even at this day.

Superior to all our other spiritual feasts is, however, the sublime season of ten days which yearly opens with our New Year or *Rosh Hashanah* and closes with the Day of Atonement or *Yom Kippur*. Holy Days in aim and nature more sublime it is impossible to imagine. Religious history furnishes no example of such a divine effort to triumph over the lower proclivities of human nature. Man is imperatively called upon to look into self, scrutinize his inmost being with

the eye of severe impartiality, review his past life, give thought to the higher ends of his sublunar existence; arraign self before self; break the shackles that chain him to grossness and sensuality, and, on the wings of prayer and repentance, coupled with resolves of a worthier future, rise to a realization of this world's vanity, the serious aspects of this life, the justice of God, the beauty of virtue, and the certainty of Divine Judgment. Few are they in the camp of Israel who, at the approach of those "awful days," are not aroused from their religious lethargy, not stirred to an endeavor of rising above the common level of thought and feeling. A spiritual wave seems to strike every Jewish home, fill every Jewish heart except such as are utterly lost to any and every sense of faith and reverence.

During this season virtue in all manner of expression celebrates her glorious triumphs. Charity and humility are the predominant manifestations of penitence. Long before dawn masses throng the places of worship and prayerful invocations are wafted heavenward. The Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement are to the Jew days of supreme Judgment. He feels himself in the Awful Presence of the Highest Tribunal; feels that he has to give account of self; that time is fleeting, the grave open, and the record waiting. Between Israel and Jehovah there is no intermediary influence, he being as much of God Himself as any other being under the sun. He obeys the Voice of the Highest Throne, that commands: "Make peace with self, thy fellow-man, and thy God!" He hears the message, knows that he stands among the stars responsible to none but his Author. The sovereignty of God is contrasted with the impotence of man, and history is briefly reviewed to impress the Jewish mind with the never-failing love of THE ONLY ONE. On the Day of Atonement neither drink nor food, nor any other physical indulgence, is allowed from sunset to sunset. An extreme effort is made to suppress the low instinct. Passion is conquered. Enemies shake hands and make peace. Parents rest their blessing hand on the head of their dear ones, and the tears roll profusely. Peace is the motto, the look, the breath, the wish of every good Israelite.

It is a perfect self-consecration of humanity to the Divinest Ideal ; it is a celestial triumph of the spirit over the body, the spiritual over the material in man's nature.

The Spiritual Realities of Judaism, Divine in their simplicity, awful in ideal majesty, are such as only a people can realize whose law-giver's sweetest longing was to see God face to face. Let our daughter religions parade their Christmas and their Ramazans. The spiritual fountain-head is with us, unebbing, ever flowing, pure as the azure's deep, brilliant as the Galaxy, sweet, fresh, mighty, heavenly ; fed by Him Who feeds the solar spheres. Not before Israel's sanity is diseased will he yield to a faith of fancy, founded on myth, initiated with blood, enforced with fire and sword, disgraced by human hatred, and polluted by corruption. The Jew's Holy of Holies is the human heart ; his temple is the universe, his altar, his home, and his High Priest God Himself. As civilization advances the humane spirit of Judaism gains in ascendancy, while orthodox Christianity is losing its hold and is slowly but steadily verging toward the state of decay. As to Mohammedism, it is fast sinking beneath its own dead-weight. Such is the fate of all pretentious imitations. The genuine alone endures. Not thus a faith rooted in God, human love, stern justice, and a longing for perfection. How could such an ideal cease, or be superseded, there being nothing truer than truth, nothing diviner than perfection ? Therefore is Judaism imperishable and Israel invulnerable, immortal. There is something awful in the stirring world-career of the chosen race. To think of the fact that the language in which the angels spoke to Abraham, and in which Moses proclaimed the Ten Commandments, is the one in which Jewish weeklies and dailies and a vast literature are published at this hour ! A contemplation like this in connection with Israel's past and triumphs tempts one to exclaim, with Addison :—

“The stars shall fade away, the sun himself  
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years ;  
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,  
Unhurt, amid the war of elements,  
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds !”

Sweetest of dreams, grandest of realities ! To be the throbbing, immortal heart of spiritual humanity. Thus has, after thousands of years, the patriarch's and the prophet's dream been realized. Jehovah is THE GOD and Israel His people. Spirit of truth, bones of our sacred ancestry, ashes of our martyrs burned in slow fires, not in vain did ye fight, struggle, suffer, and triumph over death. No candle is lit to celebrate the memory of Vespasian, but a myriad illuminations tell yearly of the deathless Maccabees. Scorning the Divine Law, is it not mocking the sun ? (Rejecting Horeb, Carmel, and Zion, is it not sublimating, aye, annihilating Golgotha and Mecca ? The world is on its return to God and Sinai, and the high road to salvation runs not through St. Peter's pompous Cathedral, but through Ezra's unpretentious Synagogue. The Jew never for a moment admitted that either earth or heaven belonged to the Pope, and he is alive to see paradise restored to all men. Ah, they have all done their utmost to degrade and defame the Jew. But "the martyr cannot be dishonored," thinks Emerson. "Every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame; every prison a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side. Hours of sanity and consideration are always arriving to communities, as to individuals, when the truth is seen and the martyrs are justified." How long Israel was waiting for those "hours of sanity !" but he waited not in vain.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### CONCLUSION.

A GENERAL review like this of "Jewish Dreams and Realities," as the last lines are written, involuntarily raises the question whether the subject has been fairly treated, that is, whether the picture has not been overdrawn in favor of the main question and its kindred topics, which are inevitably involved in such a wide-reaching discussion? Conscience is appealed to and doubt arises as to the mental capacity of one brain of a certain bent of mind or bias of thought to sum up the real and fictitious, the true and the false, in a maze of creeds, doctrines, traditions, legends, visions, feelings, hallucinations, inspirations, deceptions, misrepresentations, and fancies; and to constitute one's self the arbiter in awarding the medal of merit to whomsoever it may belong. With whom is truth? At the age of eighty, Whittier answers to the question of an Israelite, "I don't know what it means to be a Jew, but I know what it means to be a Christian who has no quarrel with others about their creeds, and can love, respect, and honor a Jew who honestly believes in the faith of his fathers, and who obeys the two great commandments, 'Love to God and Love to Man.'"

And the *London Times*, some weeks ago, editorially remarked, "The Jews are suffered readily to take the high position to which their intellect—perhaps sharpened by centuries of persecution—fits them. Their period of probation has left them stronger and more capable than ever, as the ranks of our professions show. If the more humble members of the faith have taken refuge, like hunted creatures, in occupations repugnant to other men, and have developed a triumphant facility in such callings, it is the fault not of the race, but of its persecutors." Is not all this a sign of the times?

Even Catholic Spain openly confesses and deplors the aberrations of her sires' Christianity. Imagination is aghast at the flood of evil that could have been a flood of good had the Church but in a limited measure complied with her founder's nobler teachings of human love and mercy. A race whose grateful generosity opens Eden's gate for Hiram, and looks up to Cyrus as a Messiah, could not but honor a religion like that of a Macaulay, a Browning, a Beecher, a Whittier, and their like, of whom there is no paucity in this age. What cordial fraternization would have brought about in unifying the race, it is much easier to guess than to tell. Civilization might a thousand years ago have reached its present stage, and our century might have been permitted to witness what a millennium hence is likely to see—a race united in love and spiritual affinity. That events so detrimentally turned against the general welfare of mankind, and that the Church was so conspicuously instrumental in retarding the consummation of that very ideal she claimed to represent, justifies her being called to account before the tribunal of history. Philanthropy weeps at the universal evil conjured up by the distortion and abuse of the divinest of gifts laid in the human soul. Religion, ethereal, robed in light, fragrance, and humility, the wand of peace and grace in hand, and the smile of ineffable bliss in the eye; the gentlest and meekest of angels, the Church has turned into the fiercest, the blackest of devils, spitting blood, fire, venom, and hatred; a demon with eyeballs of terror, talons of iron, ravenous, bloodthirsty, voracious, greedy, and of tiger's ferocity. Love, truth, mercy, salvation, with that Church? If you whisper such blasphemous falsehoods, Satan, who for eighteen centuries has been rolling in fits of hellish laughter at this idea, may yet indulge the hope of turning once more this earth into an insane asylum. Rather let us answer the question: With whom is truth?

With whom is truth? Reason answers: With him who is in search thereof, not with him who claims her exclusive possession. The wisest of Greece doubted his wisdom, and this proves him to have been the wisest. The wisest Hebrew king exclaimed: Who knoweth that the spirit of the sons of man

ascendeth skyward, and the spirit of the beast descendeth downward?" Who knows, who knows? Such is the burden of Israel's history, his thought, such the refrain of his grand epic works. He has no iron-clad dogmas. The enemy of growth and free thought is the immovable dogma. It transforms the living banyan-tree of human intellect and sentiment into a fossil; it petrifies the mind; it mummifies nature, embalms the universe, lames the wing of imagination, and is pitifully alarmed at the least symptom of independent life, is panic-stricken at the sight of bud or blossom. How could a world made for life ever young and ever green, a race whose progress means vitality and stagnation decay, make peace with a power who enforces its two commandments, the first being: "Thou shalt not think," and the second: "Hate him who dares to think." Are not these substantially the conditions of the orthodox cross and the crescent? "What the Koran contains not, you may burn," says Omar. "Believe my infallibility, kiss my shoe, or you shall never enter paradise," says the pope. "Either trinity or eternal perdition," says Luther. "Ungodly, cruel priests," says the Jew, "our fathers teach that *the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come.*" How overlook this immense distance between Jewish universality and non-Jewish partiality? How overlook it with centuries of telling history before us? Jesus and Mohammed exhaust their ingenuity in creating abysmal gulfs of blood-curdling horrors, peopled by terrific fiends, whose delight is human agony, monsters a gracious God had called forth to torment in eternity frail human beings, and Moses is criticised for having been silent as to the beyond. To think that hundreds of millions are still living and dying under the illusion of that abominable doctrine; to realize the anguish of the dying, and of the surviving, who, not alone lose each other torn from the bosom of love, but have a foretaste of hell in the certain expectation of the dear departing ones sinking into the claws of howling, yelling, lacerating devils, must be sufficient for any feeling being to turn away with a shudder from the Church and the Mosque. Where in the Old Testament is there explicit mention of a hell or a heaven? Divine

retribution is alluded to and nothing else. As to post-Biblical conceptions we have already quoted Joseph Albo, who rejects *Gehinnom* as being nothing else than an allegory, an assertion no one ever thought of gainsaying, and deriving strong support from Pharisaic lore where—*Nedarim* 8—it is positively said: “There is no Gehinnom in the world beyond, but, drawn forth from the body, the virtuous soul lives in the blissful memory of the good, and the wicked suffers in memory of the evil left behind.”

Had we nothing else to say in glorification of our ideal, would not that universal recognition of the good in every human being, regardless of race and creed, and the philosophical aspect of Divine retribution, justify the Mother Faith in her claims of an ethical and spiritual superiority over her immodest off-shoots? We deal not in windy articulation; we challenge the detractors of Israel and of his God to face fact with fact, life with life, history with history, and convince us why we should desert Jehovah for Baal.

Who, in his senses, could for one moment doubt the title of all men to earthly happiness and to heavenly bliss—whatever this be—provided righteous, dignified manhood keeps them on the high level The Almighty assigned to the noblest of His creatures below. Aryan, Semite, Mongol, or Negro, humanity and philanthropy know no race nor creed nor color; they only distinguish between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, the good and the bad. When the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea the angels, says tradition, rose to sing hymns in triumph of the just cause, but God said: “My creatures are in distress, and you want to sing!” Sweet, philanthropic Judaism that has compassion even for the oppressor, the tyrannical taskmaster. Who did invent Aryanism and Semitism as watchwords of hostile design? That hydra-headed misanthropy everybody knows was engendered and is being nursed by the hate-breathing, orthodox priest.

On this occasion we may aptly introduce a few stanzas from a work which we have in preparation, wherein Don Isaac Abarbanel pleads the cause of religious liberty before Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholics; it is a Jewish view:—

Man worships greatness even in his foes,  
 By worship lifted genius Godlike grows;  
 Mere whim divides what God designed to be  
 In all His realms harmonious unity.  
 Mankind is one, one like that Fountain-Head  
 Whence life is flowing, whither go the dead;  
 One soul in all, oft bursting forth in beams  
 Of truth eternal from ethereal streams;  
 Whoso seeks Truth and clings to her with love,  
 In him is virtue, spirit from above;  
 If man but worship, needless to agree,  
 Or force conviction, man like God is free;  
 Free as the bird, who free his carol sings  
 In various cadence God's sweet mercy rings;  
 Free as the cloud, free as the ocean's vast,  
 As thunder free, free as the lightning's blast;  
 As must our breath, so must our thought, be free,  
 With mind in chains life is but slavery.  
 In countless ways Almighty works His ends,  
 The bud, the blossom toward mild sunshine bends,  
 Free homage paying to that radiant sphere;  
 He worships not, who worships out of fear.  
 The freeborn reverence God, why rules enforce  
 On mind sky-driven like the water's course?

Though from great ocean all the waters spring  
 Which flood the earth and precious blessings bring,  
 On deep azure throw high that gloriest span  
 Of seven hues which is the awe of man,  
 Not all, ascending the cloud-vested height,  
 Descend to mirror the heaven's stellar light—  
 In streams of crystal, lakes of skyey blue,  
 In brook or river, pearls of sparkling dew;  
 But some are winding through wild sinuous tracks,  
 Some bounding forth in leaping cataracts;  
 Through rock and crevice some burst into light,  
 Some well in tunnels, some in dreary night;  
 Some spread destruction in the fertile plain,  
 Some clear return, some troubled, to the main;  
 And, like the waters, so the human wave  
 Around this world does, groping, searching, brave  
 Mysterious destiny with pall and grave,  
 Instinct with faith, that spirit pure must rise,  
 As things ethereal, to the rainbow'd skies.  
 With reason dawning, feelings undefined,  
 Man long of Edens and of hells divined;  
 With ardor turned to the orb of day,



The river, brute adored, or gods of clay,  
 Believed his idol truest of the rest,  
 His worship truest and his creed the best.  
 A freezing horror seizes heart and mind  
 When, gazing through the darker times behind,  
 I see the reeking fumes from altars rise  
 Where man of man makes horrid sacrifice;  
 His kin, his child delivers to the flames,  
 Vile incest fosters, or his body maims,  
 Convinced his fetich of immortal bliss,  
 Delights in foulness, sacrifice like this!

Ah, old is error, old the quest of truth,  
 As old as longing for immortal youth  
 And power here; not undivine our greed  
 To win dominion, spread a cherish'd creed;  
 For life hereafter—this our highest goal—  
 As God is living, deathless is our soul!  
 To live forever strove immortal Cid,  
 Immortal dreams did raise the pyramid,  
 Oil, bronze, and marble quicken to the breath  
 Of art disputing the domain of death;  
 Nay, plant and beast, each species it appears,  
 Obeying nature, sturdy offsprings rear  
 Its kind unweaken'd living to preserve;  
 Why manhood thus impeach that would not swerve  
 From sacred lines a hundred ages trace?  
 Can filial reverence a loyal child disgrace?  
 Lou's prophet joins the teacher of Iran,  
 The Orient's wisest who gave light to man;  
 The dreamer of Nirvana, and the mage  
 Of Egypt's wisdom, how far from the sage  
 Of Greece, and Rome, and Bethlehem are they,  
 Who of good powers and of evil say,  
 Alternate ruling as frail mortals prove,  
 Or hateful demons or high priests of love?  
 The faith of love, what else proclaimed he,  
 Your worshiped master, what our prophecy?  
 In sight of him, his symbols within ken,  
 Who dreamt of peace and good-will to all men;  
 Without a verse of Scripture, old or new,  
 Without a cause, an accusation true,  
 Without a tear of human misericord,  
 They burn, O queen, the image of the Lord!  
 A myriad tortured, burned on the stake,  
 Who would, impious, not with sires break,  
 From Sinai bearing, in Jehovah's Name,

The grandest message mankind to reclaim!  
 Sweet charity may justice help to stay  
 The cruel rod that wounds, too weak to slay,  
 A people's honor tested by the tears  
 And death-defiance of three thousand years.

With the universalization of Judaism by Hebrew Prophecy and Jewish philosophy, the question is no more, Who is the Jew? but Who and why is man? What a question! How grave, how absorbing, how worthy of the purest, the highest, and the deepest thought! Who is man? A mystery! You see before you a being whose beginning and whose end are hidden in impenetrable darkness; and what a being he!—free, noble, great, majestic, perfect in form, divine in appearance, unfathomable in quality, with inexpressible wonders written in his mien, radiating from the gulfs of the eye; dwelling among the stars, a riddle to himself yet conscious of divinity. Who is man? Scripture tells, he was the last work of creation, the only one into whom God has breathed His Breath, thus immortal. Similar are the conclusions of science, which likewise recognizes in him the master-work of the Divine Author, the highest being known to biology, but one whose construction, bodily and mental, is as mysterious as the frame and the Spirit of the star-built universe. As old and thorough as the science of anatomy claims to be, she is amazed at the inextricably entangled piece of divine mechanism called the human body. Anatomy dissects the frame of man, examines its largest and minutest parts, muscles, arteries, tissues, nerves, blood, brain; she counts the joints of the skeleton, analyzes, microscope in hand, every atom of solid and fluid matter accessible to her gaze, and, when all is done, she stands baffled, admitting her very limited comprehension of those phenomena of life which she is most anxious to know. “So it is,” no more, not How? nor Why? The heart, an inscrutable wonder, drives the life fluid through the mazes of the body, feeding, like a mystic stream, the remotest and tiniest channels thereof. Our nervous system, like a net of gauze, covers every inch of the human form, the most perfect telegraph conceivable, giving warning of the least touch the province it

covers may experience. Ask the anatomist where it begins and where it ends. "I do not know," is his answer. He assures you, however, that brain is a kind of gray matter, densely interwoven with an extremely fine and delicate tissue, affirming it without hesitation to be the seat of mental consciousness and intellectual energy, as well as the central organ of several other functions, meeting all sensory appeals of the complex human organism. This is all science knows of that central seat of intellect, sensation, and perception. Yet, brain alone turned this wild planet into an Eden, and rules over it with the thunder and lightning of Olympian supremacy. So little does science know of the visible man.

But there is the invisible man, who is the Godlike being in the truest sense. It is the moral, intellectual, and the spiritual man of whom we must take cognizance, since it is the incorporeal in the universe, as well as in humanity, which concerns us most, those undefined qualities which, in transcendental excellence, are the attributes of The Supreme, and, in an infinitely lesser and baser degree, make up that supernal power called the image of God, or the soul. Psychology is the science devoted to a study of those qualities in man to which we can no more than refer in passing. Our mind has the faculty of conceiving, perceiving, and retaining things for an indefinite time in the magic chambers of memory. Things seen in earliest infancy—creatures, cities, rivers, landscapes, oceans, the stars in the vast firmament—are faithfully photographed and vividly retained in the boundless galleries of the mind. Memory is vaster and deeper than all the oceans combined, for it can receive, retain, and reflect more than all the deeps on earth, and is only excelled by the seraphic virtue called imagination. Memory is the storehouse of all those things we have ourselves seen; imagination enables us to see things others have seen, or to conceive things no soul has ever seen. We hear the explorer of the North Pole tell of the regions he has dwelt in; our imagination takes hold of the given picture, and there it is. The prophet tells of a celestial vision he had at night; imagination receives his impression and retains it for aye. The poet soars on imagination's airy

wing to unmeasured heights, to unfathomed deeps; we follow him, carried aloft by the like faculty, no barrier, no distance being able to check its sweeping flight. Wedded to thought, memory and imagination lift humanity to a degree in the scale of being beyond which demi-gods may scarcely rise. Thought is, however, the pillar of light by which humanity will be led to salvation. The thinking man is the freest, happiest, and mightiest of mortals. Barbarism, infidelity, irreverence, vice, and sensuality are the absence of noble thought. Thought is the power of powers, the gateway to truth and glory; thought is an attribute of God Himself, an offspring of Eternal Wisdom.

This is the reason why Jewish philosophy sees in Wisdom the supremest emanation from the Unsearchable God; the effluence which antedates primordial matter; the fiat which made infinity teem with solar systems. The contemplation of that Supreme Wisdom flowing from the Supremest God is the object of spiritual Judaism, an object not to be attained without perfect freedom of thought. God's Wisdom was the dream and reality of the ancient Hebrew; it was the vision and inspiration of the prophetic Israelite; and is the sacred meditation of the modern philosophic Jew. Not to think implies for the Jew a break in the chain that links him to his Maker; to think means to the orthodox Christian to endanger the only pillar of the Church, which is blind faith. Obedience! cries the Church. Principle! answers the Synagogue. Israel's time-hallowed and God-sanctioned privilege is the use of his reason and the belief in his free intuition. "*Thou shalt know*" is the leading injunction in our Law. First knowledge, then faith; for "the ignorant" we have seen "cannot be truly religious." Therefore, the Jewish thirst for knowledge, the Jewish longing for wisdom, which Holy Writ, tradition, and philosophy combine in extolling above all things. "God grants wisdom to none except the wise."<sup>61</sup> Nor is Divine inspiration—the *Shekinah*—accessible to any but the most enlightened. Wisdom is put above prophecy. At the bottom

of true prophecy there is, in fact, more sound judgment, insight, and foresight, than divination or supernatural inspiration. The prophet was a wise, inspired Israelite who, having carefully surveyed present conditions, did not hesitate to foretell what was most likely to follow. Transported with the glow of spiritual realities, the ardor of a soul-thrilling reverence, the Hebrew seer, awake or asleep, saw God everywhere, and his poetically-robed visions assumed the glorious, transcendental expression of what is denominated the "Divine afflatus." His dreams were to him realities; his realities came in the dreamy sights of an etherealized wisdom. The prophet was a thinker of ideal and spiritual dreams, a progressive man, who studied the signs of the times and the needs of the age unbound by any set dogma save those ethical precepts which are indissolubly wedded to pure Monotheism. A dogmatic theology could thus never take root in Israel, since such a system necessarily precludes free thought and progress, doubt and search for truth, which, with God as the REALITY OF REALITIES, are the secret of Israel's vitality.

Our "Dreams and Realities" would close here had we not, as a tribute to candor, to put on record another kind of reality which, melancholy as it appears, is by no means unprecedented in the annals of the Lord's "firstborn." So gloomy, indeed, seems at this hour the spiritual aspect and prospect of matters Jewish that many a champion and well-wisher of our dearest cause despairs of another rejuvenation. Liberty, it is said, had accomplished what oppression tried in vain—it sensualized the modern Jew. Whatever moves in the camp of Israel moves not by a vital energy from within, but by the momentum imparted to it long ago from without. What but a decade ago would have been condemned by any and every Jewish congregation as a desecration of sacred ground, aye, as blasphemous defiance hurled to the face of a glorious ancestry and the most essential principles of the Divine Law, is now looked upon as a matter of course, necessitated, it is maintained, by "the spirit of the times;" a pliable, elastic phrase just now stretched to its uttermost. Every transgression is extenuated by the lame apology that it was due to the *spirit of the age*. Applied to



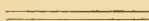
social and political changes this phrase has some sense ; applied to matters moral and spiritual it is the sheerest nonsense. The stealing of horses and the ill-treatment of parents could as easily be justified by "the spirit of the times" as the breaking of the Sabbath, or the thievish defalcations and failures, all of which are equally forbidden by the Divine Law. The times did never corrupt man ; it is man who ever corrupts the times ; and the Jew has no more ground to make the times responsible for his religious laxity or infidelity than the drunkard to make the liquor answer for his intoxication.

It were superfluous to repeat here what has been elsewhere so thoroughly ventilated ; but the remark has to be made that the lukewarmness, the indifferentism, and defiant attitude the Synagogue has of late to encounter cannot truly be imputed to superabundance of scholarship in the pulpit or to deep, intellectual culture in the pew. Just the opposite of this view comes nearest truth. Even a limited knowledge of Jewish philosophy and the methods it adopts in interpreting Scriptures and miracles would cause many of our young mock-rabbis—a set of sensational Hotspurs—to stop the ludicrous spectacles of passing from the "FEAST OF FOOLS" to the "FEAST OF ASSES." How ineffably conceited and utterly unworthy of his sacred calling that young rabbi must appear who scorns irreverently what, centuries ago, men like Maimonides, Ibn Adereth, Saadia, and Albo allegorized. Never was there denser ignorance prevailing among certain groups of Jews on Jewish matters than at this age, in this land ; and one can hardly wonder that insignificant, aye, unprincipled, men, such as would but a few decades ago not have dared to open their lips in face of a Hebrew scholar lest they be caused to blush with shame, are now the popular idols of certain miscalled "reformed Jews."

Such excrecences spring not from a healthy system. The products of the swamp betray the nature of the soil. For, instead of seeking wisdom before the Ark of the Lord, a considerable number of our degenerate brethren in this hemisphere are thirsting for novelty and sensation. They want a religion to suit "convenience," a lecturer who knows how to please, and the rotten market is there to supply the demand. This is

a sorry reality we reluctantly notice. There is, however, the consolation that such backslidings have always been endemic and spasmodic, never epidemic and permanent, in the widely scattered Jewish community. Dispersed among the nations, it is the fate of Israel to be more or less affected by every change, progressive or retrogressive, healthy or otherwise, the great world in its march towards the highest goal often undergoes. But Israel's ailments are local and transitory. Mistaking fire-flies for stars, and demons for seraphim, the Jew "time and oft" strayed into quagmires, but, happily, as often retraced his steps to healthier regions, resuming his innate moral and spiritual vigor and elasticity; undeceived, made wiser by loss, better by trials, ideal by enlightenment, Jewish by faith and reverence.

APPENDIX.



TALMUDIC MYTHOLOGY.

ALLEGORICAL TALES.



## TALMUDIC MYTHOLOGY.

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### TO THE READER.

THE following allegories, drawn from the Talmud, will repay perusal, even in their prosaic garb, as they have been beautifully reproduced in the excellent but long-defunct *Hebrew Review*. The attempt to improve them by rhythm and rhyme did not appear successful enough to reward the work it implies. Thus, having refashioned two of these charming allegories, without apparently enhancing their intrinsic poetical beauty, we concluded to give them as we found them, but slightly modified here and there.

These, together with the several Pharisaic allegories given in the second and sixth chapters of this work, though culled from a maze of allegorical beauties, will, it is thought, sufficiently convince the reader that Judaism can boast of a mythology second to none and superior to all on record. They are spiritual "Dreams and Realities" as deep, as clear, and as mysterious as heaven's unfathomed blue, telling of the heart's unappeased thirst, the soul's yearning after light, knowledge, truth, God; as old as man's deeper sorrow, and the obscurity which darkens his sight.

Born a priest, a prophet, a poet, a thinker, and a worshiper of the Most High, the responsive, true scion of Israel feels too deep, and sees too far to exchange earthly tinsel for supernal glories. Therefore his unequaled martyrdom of nineteen centuries, his readiness to wear the yellow badge of an undeserved disgrace, to lay his head on the block, his body on the burning pyre rather than forfeit his distinction, the lofty station Providence assigned him in this world as the bearer of Jehovah's banner, and the invincible champion of God's Unity and man's universal brotherhood.





## MYTHS OF THE TALMUD.

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### THE SUN AND THE MOON.

#### I.

“Two lights shall shine!” the fiat from on High,  
Through darkness roars, “two lights shall grace the sky,  
And grace the earth with radiance mild and bright;  
One orb the day shall rule, the other night!”  
Of light and flame a blaze the Orient wakes,  
A sphere of splendor to the westward breaks,  
Earth teems with life, joy ruleth far and wide,  
The Sun as bridegroom shines, the Moon as bride;  
And nature’s garb is leafage, herb, and flower,  
Each mead an Eden seems, each grove a bower,  
While gentle breezes fragrance spread abroad,  
And myriad voices praise the gracious God.

#### II.

But as in glory robed the Sun doth rise,  
His golden oceans flooding earth and skies,  
The lesser orb, unable to control  
The canker Envy, gnawing at her soul,  
Loud sorrow utters with an envious breath,  
And speaking thusly, withers pale as death:  
“Or I or He should hold ethereal sway,  
One might should rule; who would two lords obey?  
Myself can brighten with my mellow beam  
Yon globe beneath, illumine sea and stream,  
Instead of blushing at his whelming might;  
The first not I within the realms of light.”

#### III.

These words no sooner ether struck and air  
Than paling deeper, fading in despair,  
The Moon hung dark, her mellow lustre fled;  
Twelve myriad stars rose shining in her stead;

"Have mercy, Lord!" she cried; it was too late,  
 God's judging angel sped from heaven's gate,  
 And lighting softly on the darkened moon,  
 Irrevocable judgment uttered soon.

"Unhappy star, so late with light aglow,  
 Now dark as night, in tears which welling flow;  
 Hear, envious Moon, how great, how gracious He,  
 Who, punishing, doth temper His decree.

## IV.

"Thyself henceforward shalt for light depend  
 On yonder orb, that will his radiance send  
 To lighten thee with splendors dazzling far,  
 Through borrowed light thou shalt yet shine a star,  
 The queen of night, of peace, and balm of sleep  
 For such as toil and such as long and weep,  
 And such as love and such as hopes deceive  
 Beneath thy rule shall soothing dreams relieve.  
 God's mercy granted this, Who saw thy tears,  
 The Sun be king, thou queen, of all the spheres;  
 Beware of Envy though, this temptress fell  
 Did mighty angels from the sky expel."

## V.

A silver sea, as off the angel fled,  
 The generous Sun upon the Moon did shed,  
 Who penitent and pale her course doth roll,  
 Since weeping nightly, though devoid of dole;  
 Herself forgetting when she sees below  
 Man's mortal pains, his aggregate of woe,  
 She feels compassion and she mourns with him,  
 Poor child of dust, whose destiny is dim.  
 Thus, when the day descendeth in the west,  
 The Moon brings healing balsam for the breast,  
 And pain is drowned in the peace of rest,  
 Since what by day doth often hopeless seem,  
 Illusion grants it in the realms of dream.

## MERCY'S CHILD.

"A glorious world, a star of light and shade,  
A seat of joy, the last world We have made,"  
The Lord exclaimed, "but not for beasts alone  
Were gifts unnumbered thus bestowed upon  
That master-work of Our inscrutable plan,  
The world is there and now create We man."

"Create not man," a seraph bows in awe;  
He Justice mirrors, guardian of the Law;  
"Let him not be who will Thy Law disdain,  
Will knowledge have and free-will all in vain;  
Will wrong the weak, oppress his helpless kin,  
Through theft and treason will his triumphs win."

"Why man create," a meeker cherub spoke,  
"Who war and hatred will beneath provoke,  
Will rouse Thy wrath to drown him in a flood,  
And stain that planet with his brother's blood?  
Create him not, who will his kindred bleed,  
Create him not," the angel, Peace, did plead.

Then Truth majestic made thus her appeal:  
"Foreknowledge tells me man will falsely deal  
With me, Thy oldest daughter of the skies,  
Will yield to falsehood, foster hateful lies;  
Make him not, Father; hear my ardent plea,  
Thou God of Truth, Who hates hypocrisy."

Angelic ministers, as Truth doth end,  
Before the Lord in blazing legions bend;  
Then, as a mighty wave, do roar and rise,  
While Echo answers from the lofty skies:  
"Create not man to live and die in pain,  
Give him no star with guilt and blood to stain."

Compassion breathing, weeping angel's tears,  
The gentlest figure of the heavenly spheres,  
Sweet Mercy, she the youngest child of God,  
Craves leave to speak; this granted by a nod,

Her words fall softly as the silver beam  
The placid moon throws on the placid stream.

“ Create him, Father ; let man rise to life ;  
Endow him richly for his destined strife ;  
Of yonder orb make him sole ruling king ;  
Let from his weakness strength and virtue spring ;  
And should all guardian angels from him flee,  
Myself, Thy Grace, will bear him company ;

“ Will cleanse his heart, should him Temptation lure,  
And have him share the sorrows of the poor,  
Sustain the widow, dry the orphan’s tear ;  
And help the helpless all their burdens bear ;  
Thus, chasten’d, rising by endeavors mild,  
Thy image gracing, he sweet Mercy’s child.”

“ Thy plea be granted,” said the Lord of Grace ;  
“ It is ordainèd that the mortal race,  
In spirit mighty, though in nature frail,  
Against all evil shall in time prevail,  
And, having earth, shall once the skies invade,  
Since Mercy pleads for him—let man be made ! ”

The angels hear it and submissive bow,  
Celestial harmonies to earthward flow,  
Delicious fragrance spreads throughout the skies,  
Life’s angel breathes and the oceans rise,  
All nature quickens, yielding up her best  
To make man rise, of earth the holiest.

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### THE INFANCY OF ABRAHAM.

Abraham was reared in a cavern, for the tyrant Nimrod, forewarned by his astrologers that the infant son of Terah would teach mankind to renounce the worship of idols, sought to take his life. But in the darksome cave the light of God illumined his youthful mind. He reflected, and asked himself, “ Whence am I ? Who has created me ? ”



He has reached the age of sixteen years, when he left his dreary abode, and for the first time beheld the heavens and their resplendent orbs, the earth and its fullness. How astonished was he, and how rejoiced ! He interrogated all creation around him : “ Whence are ye ? Who has created you ? ”

The sun arose in his glory. Abraham prostrated himself. “ This must be the Creator ! ” exclaimed he. “ Great and beauteous is his appearance ; his radiance dazzles my feeble eye.” The sun pursued his course, and set at eventide to make room for the silvery moon ; and Abraham said to himself : “ The luminary which has set cannot be the God of heaven ; it yields to yonder lesser light, and to the hosts of stars by which it is attended.” But clouds overspread the sky, and moon and stars were soon hidden from his sight, and Abraham stood alone in the midst of his meditation.

He went to his father and asked : “ Who is God, the Creator of heaven and earth ? ”. Terah showed him his idols. “ I will put their divinity to test,” said he to himself, and, when he was alone, he presented them with the choicest viands, addressed them, and said : “ If ye are living Gods accept my offering, that I may worship you.” But immovable stood the idols ; no ear had they for his invocation. “ And these,” exclaimed the youth, “ my father considers his Gods. But perhaps I may show him he is in error.” He took a staff and shivered the idols into fragments, except one within whose bended arm he placed his staff. He then hurried to his father, and said : “ Father, thy great god has slain his lesser brethren.”

But Terah looked at him in anger and said : “ Mock me not, boy ! How can he do what thou hast said, since my own hand fashioned him, who is inanimate ? ” And Abraham replied : “ Be not angry, O my father, but let thine ear hear and thy reason weigh what thine own mouth has uttered. If thou deemest him incapable of a feat which my boyish hand was capable of performing, how can he be the God Whose power created thee and me, heaven, and earth ? ”

Terah stood silent before the reproof of his son ; but the fame of Abraham and the audacity of his deed soon reached the ear of the tyrant Nimrod, who summoned the youth before

him, and thus sternly spoke: "My god thou must serve, or the burning furnace awaits thee!"

"And who, O king, is thy god?" inquired the undaunted Abraham.

"The fire is my god, the mightiest of all beings," answered the king.

"Fire," replied the youth, "is quenched by Water: Water is borne by the clouds: The clouds are scattered by the wind, but man defies the pelting of the storm and the blast of the wind: Thus man is the mightiest of beings." -

"And I am the mightiest of men," said the king; "adore me, then, or the fiery, burning furnace awaits thee."

But Abraham fixed his illumined eye on the king, and said: "Yesterday at morn I beheld the sun arise, and I saw him set in the evening. Command now, O king, that the sun arise at eventide and set in the morning, then will I worship thee."

The king deigned no further reply, but, at a sign from him, the youth was led off and hurled into the midst of the fiery furnace. But the rage of the fire harmed not the dauntless martyr. An angel of the Lord received him in his arms, and fanned the flames away from him. They refreshed him like the fragrance of roses. Beauteous and radiant the youth went forth from the furnace, and soon God appeared to him and ordered him to forsake Chaldea for the land He would show him.

So did Abraham become the founder of the true worship of the Only God, Who created heaven and earth, for all the human beings who inhabit the terrestrial globe.

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### THE POWER OF TEARS.

For three days Isaac was dead in the heart of Abraham, for God had chosen him as a burnt-offering, and the father refused not obedience. Silently Abraham ascended the steep height of Moriah, lost in painful reflection, when the friendly voice of his child aroused him. "Behold, my father, we have fire and wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?" And Abraham replied: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

Onward they wound their way in silence, and they came to the place of which God had told Abraham. Here he built an altar, laid the wood in order, bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son, and he cast one look of anguish up to heaven, for the boy lay mute upon the altar. He neither complained nor remonstrated, but he silently turned his streaming eyes to heaven. The silent tear that glistened in the eyes of both moved the sky; its mute appeal ascended to the heavens and pleaded before the mercy-seat of Him before Whom silence is equal to eloquence.

And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Here I am!" replied the patriarch. "Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him." Joyfully the father received the destined victim, the son who was restored unto him, and he called the scene of his anguish and joy, "The Lord seeth." He sees the silent tear in the eye of the sufferer. He sees the mute anguish of the heart, which implores more fervently than the loudest appeal. \* \* \*

Threefold are the prayers of man to God, and their efficacy is also ascending in its degrees. The quiet petition of the heart is acceptable to the All-Merciful. He hears and graciously receives it from the moving lip. The loud cry of distress in the hour of need pierces the sky, and heaps burning coal on the head of the oppressor. But more mighty than these is the mute prayer of the sufferer, who steadfastly cleaves to his God, even in the hour of death. It forces the gates of heaven, breaks locks and bolts, appears before the throne of Mercy, and calls down the look of Him Who ever "seeth."

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### THE DEATH OF MOSES.

When Moses, the faithful messenger of God, was to die, and his hour approached, the Lord assembled His angels and said: "It is time to recall the soul of my servant; who among you will go and summon her to come into My Presence?" At

this the princes of the angelic hosts, Michael and Gabriel, with all who stand before the throne of the Lord, imploring, said: "We are his; he has been our teacher; thus let not us summon the soul of this man." But Samaël, the leader of the rebellious angels, stood forth and said, "Behold! here I am; send me." And he went.

Arrayed in wrath and cruelty he descended, wielding the flaming sword in the right hand. He rejoiced beforehand at the agony, the death-throe of the righteous. But when he came nearer Moses, he found that *his eyes were not dim, nor his natural force abated*. The servant of the Lord wrote the words of his last song and the Sacred Name. His countenance was resplendent, radiant with the peace and brightness of heaven. Samaël stood abashed; his sword dropped out of his hand, and he hurried away. "I cannot bring the soul of this man," he said to the Lord; "for in him I have found nothing impure."

And the Lord descended to summon the soul of His faithful and beloved servant. Michael and Gabriel and all the attending angels followed in His train. They prepared the bier of Moses and surrounded it, and a voice was heard: "Fear not; I Myself will bury thee."

Then Moses prepared himself to die, and sanctified himself even as one of the seraphim. And the Lord called unto his soul and said: "My daughter! one hundred and twenty years is the term allotted for thy inhabiting my servant's earthly tenement. The time is expired; then come forth and tarry not."

And the soul of Moses answered, saying: "O Lord of the universe! I know that Thou art God, the sovereign Ruler of all spirits and of all souls, and that the living and the dead are alike in Thy hands. From Thee I received Thy glorious Law; I saw Thee in flame; I ascended and went along the pathway toward heaven; girt with Thy Power, I entered the palace of Egypt's king, I took the crown from off the head of the proud Pharaoh, and did manifold signs and wonders in his land. I led forth Thy people and parted the sea, and have made known Thy Will unto the sons of man. I dwelt beneath the throne of Thy Glory; my hut was under the pillar

of light, and I have spoken with Thee face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend. And is not all this enough for me? Receive me, therefore, for now I come to Thee."

The Breath of the Most High touched the lips of Moses, whose soul departed in the touch. So did Moses die at the mouth of God, who Himself buried him; and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

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### THE SONGS OF NIGHT.

As David, in his youthful days, was tending his flocks on Bethlehem's plains, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and his senses were opened and his understanding enlightened, that he might comprehend the songs of the night. The heavens proclaimed the Glory of God; the glittering stars all formed one chorus; their harmonious melody resounded on earth, and the sweet fullness of their voices vibrated to its uttermost bounds.

"Light is the countenance of the Eternal," sang the setting sun. "I am the hem of His garment," responded the rosy tint of twilight. The clouds gathered and said: "We are His nocturnal pavilion;" and the waters in the clouds, and the hollow voice of the thunders joined in the lofty chorus: "The Voice of the Eternal is upon the waters, the God of Glory thundereth; the Lord upon the waters."—"He doth fly upon my wings," whispered the gliding wind; and the silent air replied: "I am the Breath of God—the aspiration of His benign Presence."

"We hear the songs of praise," said the parched earth; "all around is praise; I alone am silent and mute!" And the falling dew replied: "I will nourish thee, so that thou shalt be refreshed and rejoiced, and thy infants shall blossom like the young rose."

"Joyfully we bloom," echoed the refreshed meadows. The full ears of corn waved as they sung: "We are the blessing of God, the hosts against famine."—"We bless you from above,"



said the moon; "we bless you," responded the stars; and the grasshopper chirped: "Me too He blesses in the pearly dew-drops."—"He quenched my thirst," said the roe; "and refreshed me," continued the stag; "and grants us our food," said the beasts of the forest; "and clothes my lambs," gratefully sang the sheep.

"He heard me," croaked the raven, "when I was forsaken and alone;"—"He heard me," said the wild goat of the rocks, "when my time came and I calved." And the turtle-dove cooed, and the swallow and all the birds joined their song: "We have found our nests, our houses; we dwell on the altar of the Lord, sleep under the shadow of His wing in tranquillity and peace."

"And peace," replied the night, and Echo prolonged the sound, when chanticleer awoke the dawn and crowed: "Open the portals, the gates of the world! The King of Glory is coming! Awake! arise! ye sons of men, give praises and thanks to the Lord; for the King of Glory is coming!"

\* \* \* \* \*

The sun rose and David awoke from his melodious rapture. But as long as he lived the strains of creation's harmony remained in his soul, and daily they sounded from the strings of his harp.

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## THE DAWN.

Hast thou seen the glorious dawn, the beauteous harbinger of day? Its brilliancy proceeds from the apartment of God; a ray of the Imperishable Light that brings consolation to mankind.

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As David, pursued by his foes, passed a dreadful night of agony in a dismal cleft of Hermon's rock, he sung the most pathetic of his Psalms: "Lions and tigers roar around me; the assembly of the wicked have encompassed me and no help is near." When behold the dawn broke. With sparkling eyes the roe of morning sprang forth, moved over hills and plains,

and, like a messenger of the Deity, addressed the fugitive on the sterile rock: "Why dost thou complain that no help is near? I emerge from the darkness of night, and its terrors yield and vanish before the genial ray of the cheerful East."

His eye continued fixed on the purple hue of the dawn, and he felt consoled. He saw it rise, followed by the sun in all his effulgence, pouring blessings and happiness over the earth. Confidence and hope once more entered his soul; his plaintive lament became a hymn of joy; he called it "the roe of the morning, the song of the rosy dawn." אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר Often, in after-times, he repeated this Psalm, to thank his God for those perils of his early years which he had overcome, and, amid the sorrows of his later years, that Psalm ever cheered his desponding soul.

\* \* \* \* \*

Daughter of thy Creator, holy dawn, thou who every morning dost look down and rejuvenate heaven and earth, look on me, too, and renew my heart, that it may be pure, an altar devoted to thy Maker.

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### THE ROYAL SINGER.

The royal singer had sung one of his most beautiful Psalms to the glory and praise of Him Who had been his help in every need. The last notes still vibrated on the strings of his harp when Satan stood beside him and tempted the singer's heart to be proud of his song. "Among all Thy creatures," he exclaimed, "hast Thou, O Lord, one who praises Thee more melodiously than I do?"

Through the open window, before which he had spread his hands in prayer, a grasshopper flew into the king's room, and seated itself on the hem of his robe. She began her clear matin-song; a number of grasshoppers assembled around her. A nightingale came and soon many more followed, singing in chorus the praises of God.

The ear of the king was opened; he heard the concert of all animated nature: the splashing of the brook, the rustling

of the woods, the voice of the morning star, and the enrapturing song of the rising sun.

Lost in the harmony of the voices which unceasingly and unweariedly sung, the king remained silent. He thought his song excelled even by the grasshoppers which still chirped on the hem of his robe. Humility again entered his soul. He seized his harp, and gave vent to his feelings as the musical strings resounded with his enthusiasm: "Praise ye the Lord," he sung, "all His creatures; praise thou, likewise, the Lord, my inmost heart! my soul, join humbly in His praise."

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### THE YOUTHFUL SOLOMON.

A beneficent monarch once spoke to his favorite and said: "Ask a boon of me and it shall be granted to thee." And the youthful favorite said within himself: "What shall I demand that I may not hereafter repent of my request? Honor and distinction I do already possess; gold and silver are the meanest, as they are the most faithless, gifts of fortune; these are not worthy of being demanded. No; I will pray that the king's daughter be granted me, for she loves me as I love her, and in her I receive perfect happiness. This request will also secure to me the affection of my illustrious benefactor, who thus becomes my father." The favorite uttered his request and it was granted. \* \* \*

When the Lord first appeared to the youthful Solomon in a vision of the night, He said unto him: "Ask what I shall give thee." And behold the youth prayed not for gold or silver, for honor, fame, or long life. His prayer was: "Grant me wisdom;" and with her, the daughter of the Most High, he received every felicity for which he could have prayed.

To her he dedicated his most beautiful songs; her he recommended to the sons of men as the only true source of happiness. As long as he continued faithful to her he rejoiced in the blessings of God, in the love and admiration of men. And it is only through her that his fame survives and has been preserved from oblivion.

## THE AGED SOLOMON.

Luxury, riches, and ambition perverted the ripened manhood of Solomon. He forgot Wisdom, the pride of his youth, and his heart was involved and weakened in the vortex of frivolous dissipation and wicked folly. Once, as he was walking in his splendid gardens, he heard the conversation of the manifold creatures around him; for he understood the language of beast and of bird, of tree, stone, and shrub. He turned his ear and he listened.

"Behold," said the lily, "there goes the king; he passes me in his pride, whilst I, in my humility, am robed more splendid than he."

And the palm-tree waved its boughs, and said: "There he goes, the oppressor of his country; and yet his vile flatterers in their fulsome songs presume to compare him to me. But where are his boughs? where the fruit with which he gladdens the hearts of men?"

And the turtle-dove cooed to her mate: "Not one of his thousand wives would grieve for his loss as I would for thine, my only beloved." And as he went on he heard the nightingale sing to her beloved: "As we love each other Solomon loveth not. O, not one of his sultanas holds him as dear as I do thee, my dearest."

The angry monarch hastened his pace, and he came to the nest where the stork was teaching her young to launch forth on their adventurous flight. "What I do for you," said the stork to its brood, "King Solomon does not do for his son Rehoboam. He does not teach and exhort him; therefore will the young prince not thrive. Strangers will lord over his father's domain."

The king withdrew to his secret closet. Musing, he sat there in silent grief. As he sat there, sunk in painful reflection, the bride of his youthful years, Wisdom, stood before him and touched his eyelids. He fell into a deep sleep and had a melancholy vision. He saw the deputation of the tribes as they stood before his haughty son. He saw his empire divided through the silly answer of his foolish boy. He

saw ten of the tribes he had oppressed rebel, and place a stranger on their throne. He saw his palaces in ruins; his gardens rooted up; the city destroyed; the Temple of the Lord in ashes. Suddenly he awoke from his sleep, and terror seized on his troubled mind.

When lo! once more the bride of his youth, the guardian of his early career, stood visibly before him. Tears flowed from her eyes. She spoke: "Thou hast seen what hereafter will happen. Thou alone art the original cause of all these calamities. But it is not in thy power to recall or alter the past. Thou canst as little bid the years of thy youth return, as make the river flow back to its springs. Thy soul is wearied, thy heart is exhausted, and I, the forsaken of thy youth, can no more be thy companion in the land of terrestrial life."

With pity in her look she vanished, and Solomon, who had crowned his youthful days with roses, wrote in his old age a book on the vanity of all human affairs on earth.

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## ELIJAH.

Elijah was of a fiery spirit, and with a spirit of fire he performed his prophetic office. He called flames down from heaven, and he consumed his own life in his zeal. Weary and exhausted, he withdrew from the haunts of men. In the dreary desert he threw himself under a juniper-tree and sighed: "It is enough. Now, O Lord, take my soul unto Thee." And an angel of the Lord braced and strengthened him, and he reached the mountain of Horeb, where the Lord removed the burden of his prophetic calling from his shoulders, and directed him to anoint another in his stead. And when, with the anointed Elisha, Elijah came to the river Jordan a fiery chariot and fiery horses appeared. The two companions were separated, and Elijah ascended to the throne.

The first who appeared to him in the regions of bliss was Moses, his prototype. He reached Elijah his right hand through the purified flames of the fiery chariot, and said to him: "Thou hast been zealous, my brother; thy zeal has been



ardent, and thou hast suffered much from thy brethren. I have suffered likewise; still I prayed for their preservation, and offered my soul as a ransom for theirs. Nevertheless, approach the throne of the Judge, the All-Merciful."

With trembling steps Elijah advanced toward the Glory of the throne. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" demanded a voice from out of the throne. He answered: "I have been very zealous for the Lord *Zebaoth*; for Israel has forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword. I only was left, and they sought my life, to take it away."

And a fire went forth from the Glory of the throne, but the Lord was not in the fire. And a wind went forth from the throne, strong and irresistible; it rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks; but the Lord was not in the wind.

The wind and the fire had passed, when a still small voice was heard. A sensation never before experienced penetrated the prophet, and the flame of his spirit became chastened like the radiance of dawn.

"Rest thou here, Elijah;" said the Voice. "Repose and gain new vigor after thy toils; for the Lord is merciful and benevolent. Thou shalt often again descend to the sons of men; thou shalt teach but with mild kindness; thou shalt console and aid them with thy love; nor longer punish them in thy zeal; for the Lord is gracious."

And often since has Elijah visited mankind, but in a different spirit from that which animated him during his earthly sojourn. What before was ardent jealousy is now loving benignity; what was fiery zeal is now mildness and benevolence. Invisibly, or in an assumed shape, he guides the conversation of those who seek true wisdom, and unites their souls. He it is who turns the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents. Harbinger of good, he aids the righteous in the hour of danger, and is ever present to solace and strengthen those who pray. His office it is to proclaim to mankind the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SAMAËL.

When the Lord first made man out of the dust, and had crowned the perishable frame with the diadem of His likeness, He presented His latest creation to the angelic hosts of heaven. Joyfully the angels saluted their younger brother; cheerfully they attended his bridal feast celebrated in Paradise. One only of them scorned the earth-born creature. "Am I not formed out of light?" he exclaimed, "while thou art but dust of the earth? The fiery stream which flows from the Throne of Glory forms my essence, while the frail, perishable mould is thy substance."

And behold! the stream of light departed from him! As melts the snow, the glorious raiment which ornamented him with its radiance vanished, the proudest of spirits became the meanest, stripped of that power which was not his own. \* \* \*

Inflamed with rage, he withdrew from the celestial hosts, and vowed vengeance against man, the innocent cause of his fall. "I have become unhappy through you," he exclaimed, "and you shall become unhappy through me!" He had heard the Divine decree which prohibited Adam from eating the pernicious fruit of the tree of knowledge. He collected the lost rays of his withered radiance and tried to seduce them in the guise of an angel of light. But the snow melted, out of which he strove to form his garment, and, when he trod the path of the seducer, he appeared in the semblance of the serpent. Nothing remained of the shining seraph who hid himself beneath the glossy colors of the glittering snake.

Eve saw and admired him. She soon was seduced. She ate death, and reached to her husband the fruit of death. Sorrow and misery sprang from their deed, an inheritance to their latest descendants.

The Creator appeared. He judged the seduced with mercy, but vigorously He punished the seducing serpent. Accursed, it became a loathsome and detested reptile, crawling on earth. "Because it has been thy delight," He spoke to Samaël, "to make others unhappy, let joy at the grief and misery of others be henceforth thy unhallowed portion."—Exiled from the hosts

of the blessed, denied all participation in their blissful pursuits which once he shared with them, Samaël roams accursed, the executioner of his own fearful punishment—THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

### THE CONFORMATION OF MAN.

The Creator descended ; all the angels, the princes, and the elements beheld and contemplated his work. He called to the dust, and it gathered itself from all the quarters of the terrestrial globe. And the angel of earth said : “ This frame will be a mortal creature wheresoever it dwells upon earth, for it is dust, and must return unto dust.” He called on the heavenly cloud to moisten the dust. Soon the clay began to heave and shape itself into vessels and compartments. And the angel of the waters exclaimed : “ Thou wilt require nourishment, thou curiously-constructed creature ! Hunger and thirst will become inseparable from thy being.” Inwardly the veins and the cells began to be formed ; the several outward limbs assumed their shape, and the angel of life said : “ Thou wilt be subject to many desires, beautiful work of creation ! Love of thy species will attract and impel thee.”

The Creator approached with His daughters Wisdom and Love. With paternal tenderness He raised the inanimate clay, and breathed into it life and immortality. Man stood erect ; delighted he looked around. “ Behold,” said the voice of the Most High, “ all the growth of the meadows and trees, all the animals that dwell upon earth, I have given to thee. Thy fatherland, the earth, is thine, and thou shalt rule it. But thou thyself art Mine : thy breath is My gift, and when thy time cometh I summon it unto Myself.”

Wisdom and Love, the offsprings of God, stayed with the new lord of the earth, instructing him to know animate and inanimate creation. They conversed with him as loving friends, and their light remained with innocent man. \* \* \*

Man lives his allotted time on earth. Happy if Wisdom and love deign to cheer him with their inestimable gifts !

But when his allotted time expires, his body returns to mix with the elements whence it was taken, but the spirit returns again to God, by Whose paternal embrace it was breathed into him.

### THE TREES OF PARADISE.

When the Deity led man into his paradise, all the trees of the Garden of Eden saluted the favored of the Lord. With waving branches they offered him their fruits for his food, the fragrant shade of their boughs for his refreshment. "O that he would prefer me!" said the palm-tree. "I will feed him with my golden dates, and the wine of my juice shall be his beverage. My leaves should form his tranquil bower, and my branches spread their shadow above him."—"I will shower my odoriferous blossoms upon thee," urged the apple-tree, "and my choicest fruits shall be thy nourishment."

Thus all the trees of Eden greeted their new-created lord, and the Supreme Benefactor permitted him to enjoy their rich offerings. Of all He gave him liberty to partake. One fruit only he was forbidden to taste—the fruit of THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.

"A tree of knowledge!" said man within himself. "All other trees yield me but terrestrial, corporeal nourishment; but this tree, which would elevate my spirit and strengthen the powers of my mind, this tree alone I am forbidden to enjoy." Yet he silenced the voice of desire, and suppressed the rebellious thoughts which arose in his bosom. But when the voice of temptation assailed him, he tasted the pernicious fruit, the juice of which still ferments in our heart. \* \* \*

"Hard is the prohibition laid upon man," said the angel of heaven; "for what can be more tempting to a being who is gifted with reason than the acquisition of knowledge? And shall he, who will soon transgress the command, therefore be punished with death?"

"Wait and behold his punishment," replied the dulcet voice of celestial Love. "Even on the path of his errors, amidst the pangs of repentance, and the stings of remorse—even there will I be his guide, and conduct him to another tree which grows in the heavenly home."

## LILITH AND EVE.

Solitary and silent, Adam traversed his paradise. He had tended the trees, had given names to the animals, rejoiced in the rich fullness of blessings which creation everywhere unfolded ; but amidst all animate beings he could find none to share with him the wishes of his heart. At last his eye remained fixed on one of those beauteous creatures of air, which, as tradition informs us, inhabited the earth before man was called into being, and which his clearer sight could then still distinguish. Lilith was the name of this beautiful being, who, like her sisters, dwelt on trees and flowers, and fed only on the most aromatic fragrance. "All creatures," said Adam to himself, "live in social community with each other, I only stand alone ! O that this beautiful creature might become my companion !"

The Eternal heard his wish and said : "Thou hast cast thine eye on a form which is not destined for thee ; yet, in order to instruct thee by correcting thine error, thy wish shall be granted." The command of transformation was given and Lilith assumed human limbs. Joyfully Adam hastened toward her, but soon he discovered his error. The charming Lilith was proud, and disdainfully withdrew from his embrace. "Am I of the same origin as thou art ?" she haughtily exclaimed. "I am formed out of the pure air of heaven, not from the lowly dust of the earth. My life lasts thousands of years. The might of spirit is my strength, and fragrant odors my celestial sustenance. I will not join thee to increase thy lowly, dust-begotten race." She flew away and would not return to him.

And the Creator said : "It is not well that man should be alone. I will give him a mate who shall be proper for him."—A deep sleep settled on Adam's limbs, and a prophetic vision showed him the new creation. It arose from out of his side, formed of the same essence as he was. Joyfully he awoke and beheld his second self. And, when the beneficent Creator led the lovely being to him, his heart heaved and yearned towards her, for her essence had been near to his heart. "Thou art mine," he rapturously exclaimed. "Thou shalt be called *woman*, for thou art taken from man." \* \* \*



When the Lord loves a man, He gives him the mate who is his, formed for him out of his own heart, and she becomes his wife. Sensible that they were created for each other, they become one in daily-renewed contentment, and the happiness of sympathetic union. But he who desires the possession of outward charms only, and longs for a being that appertains not to him, is punished by wedding a mate who is not his, nor formed out of his own heart. Thus the two souls forced into one by a compulsive union, and soon sensible that they were not created for each other, indulge in mutual hatred, and torment one another till separated by death.

### THE VINE.

On the day of their creation the trees rejoiced, each exultingly praising its own good qualities. "The Lord hath planted me," said the majestic cedar; "firmness and fragrance, durability and strength are united in me."—"The mercy of the Lord hath planted me as a blessing," replied the unbrageous palm-tree. "In me beauty and utility are combined."—The apple-tree said: "I stand glorious among the trees, like the sun amid the heavenly hosts." And the myrtle remarked disdainfully: "Like the rose among thorns I stand distinguished among my kindred, the underwood." All boasted—the fig-tree of its fruit, the olive of its richness; even the pine-tree and the fir could rejoice and exult.

The vine alone remained drooping and silent. "To me," it sadly cried, "everything seems denied; stem nor branches, blossom nor fruit, can I boast; yet, such as I am, I will wait in silent hope." It sank down, and its tendrils wept in silent solitude.

Not long did it wait and weep, when, behold, the new-created sovereign of earth, kind-hearted man, approached. He saw a feeble plant, the sport of the winds, sunk low, as if imploring his aid. In pity he raised it, and wound the tender tree round his arbor. The air joyfully saluted the glowing vine, the heat of the sun penetrated its hard, green grains,

and prepared that sweet juice, the most precious beverage of mankind. Decked out in the fullness of its rich grapes, the vine bent down to its preserver; he tasted its refreshing juice, and called the vine *his friend*. The proud trees envied the feeble plant, for its fruit was more valued than theirs; but it rejoiced in its tender stem and the fulfillment of its hopes. Therefore doth its juice still invigorate the human heart; it cheers the desponding spirit, and imparts gladness to the mourning mind. \* \* \*

Ye who are suffering and abandoned, do not despair, but persevere in patience and hope. There is an Eye above, which beholds even you. The humblest plant yields the most delicious juice; the feeble vine begets vigor and animation.

### THE SHEPHERD IN A VISION.

In the silent midnight hour preceding the vernal festival on which the first brothers were to bring their offerings of gratitude to the Creator, Eve, their mother, beheld in a dream a wondrous vision. The white roses, which her younger son had planted round his altar, changed their hue. They looked more blood-red, more fully blown than any she had ever seen. She tried to pluck them, but they withered at her touch. On the altar lay a bleeding lamb. Plaintive voices rose around her, and among them rang a shriek of piercing despair, till all were lost, mingled in a heavenly harmony, the like of which she had never heard before.

And a picturesque plain spread before her gaze, more beautiful than even the paradise of her youth. On it a shepherd in the shape and image of her son, arrayed in robes of dazzling white, tended his flocks. The red roses made a garland which entwined his brows, and in his hand he held a lute, from which issued forth the symphony of heaven. His mild eye beamed affectionately on her, but when she approached to take his hand he vanished, and with him the vision of the night.

The mother of mankind arose as the purple dawn brightened the sky, and with a heavy heart she proceeded to the

festival. The brothers brought their sacrifice, and their parents departed. Evening came, but her sons returned not. Their anxious mother went forth to seek them. She found Abel's flocks scattered and mournfully lowing. He himself lay lifeless at the foot of the altar. His blood dyed the roses he had planted, while Cain's groans of anguish reached her ear from a neighboring cavern.

Fainting, she sank on the corpse of her son, when again the vision of her last dream rose before her. Abel was the shepherd whom she had seen in the magnificent fields of the new paradise. The red roses were twined round his brows; in his hand he held a harp, and his soft accents fell soothingly on her ear as he sang to her: "Look up to the heavens, to the stars look up, all weeping as thou art, my mother. Behold yon chariot bright, it leads to fields more blooming, to an Eden more glorious than thou ever sawest in paradise; where the blood-stained rose of suffering innocence blooms in celestial splendor, and its sighs are turned into tunes of rapture."

The vision vanished. With a strengthened mind and hopeful resignation, Eve rose from the lifeless body of her son. The next morn his parents bedewed it with their hot tears, wound it with the roses died in his life-blood, and buried him at the foot of the altar he had raised to the Lord, in the presence of blushing dawn, which spread her Orient glories over the Eastern skies.

Often they sat at his tomb in the silent hour of midnight, their eyes turned to the starry firmament. There they sought their beloved shepherd, there they hoped to meet him again.

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### THE DEATH OF ADAM.

Nine hundred and thirty years had passed from the moment when the Breath of the Creator gave life to the clay, when Adam felt within him the sentence of the Supreme Judge: "Thou shalt surely die."—"Let all my sons appear before me, let them all come that I may see and bless them," said he to weeping Eve. Many hundreds in number, his descendants

came, all standing around him, praying and weeping for his life.—“Who among you,” said Adam, “will ascend the holy mount? Perhaps he may find mercy for me and bring me the fruit of the tree of life.” All his sons rose, each was willing to go, but the father selected Seth, the most pious, to be the messenger of imploring pity.

Robed in mourning, Seth hastened on and soon stood before the gates of Eden, imploring: “Let him find mercy, All-Merciful; send my father the fruit of the tree of life.” Suddenly a radiant cherub stood before him, in his hand a branch with one solitary leaf, not the fruit of life. “Convey it to thy father to cheer his parting hour,” said he, “for eternal life dwells not on earth. But haste on, for his hour is come.”

Seth hurried to the death-bed of his father: “This branch an angel sends to cheer thy parting hour; it is not the fruit from the tree of life.” Adam took the branch and rejoiced, inhaling the odor which invigorated his soul. “Everlasting life we find not on earth, my children,” said he; “you all will follow me, but in this leaf I breathe the air of another world of immortality.” With this his eyes closed and his spirit fled. All the children wept, except Seth, who planted the branch at the head of his father’s tomb, and called it *the branch of renovated life, awaking from death.*





**SOL:**  
**AN EPIC POEM.**  
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*Minneapolis Journal*:—Rabbi Iliowizi has given years to the composition of this epic, which, in so far as it portrays the traditions, hopes, virtues, and aspirations of his own people, has been to him a labor of love. As a poem it is rich in incident and majestic in movement—a touching, beautiful story, admirably told, abounding in passages of true poetic fervor and dramatic power. While congratulating our townsman upon the unusual merit of his poem, we bespeak for it a hearty welcome among our people. Its theme and treatment commend it alike to Israelite and Christian. Loyalty to home talent should give this work a place in every Minneapolis library.

*St. Paul Pioneer Press*:—The author treats his subject with much poetic vigor. Beautiful similes abound. Scenes are vividly set forth. Of course, in a work of this kind, there must be a suggestion of the "Divine Comedy," but, nevertheless, this poem is filled with fresh conceptions eloquently expressed. Perhaps Mr. Iliowizi relied a little too much on the interest of the story for carrying the reader through the monotony of rhyme. The tale is certainly thrilling enough to do this.

*Chicago Journal*:—The reverend author of this epic claims for it an historic ground. It is the story of a Hebrew maiden who suffered a martyr's death in Morocco, about half a century ago. Mr. Iliowizi's poem, which is the work of years, will be read with interest and pleasure, not only by the people of his own race, but by the Christian also.

*The Jewish Messenger of New York*:—These thrilling incidents have been skillfully seized upon by the author for his epic. Throughout the book the author displays a force and eloquence which are promising for his future. His style is often pithy and epigrammatic, and we feel confident that, with study and practice, his literary gifts will give him a worthy place among the writers of the day.

*The Occident of Chicago*:—The author exhibits a dexterous pen in giving the tragic end of Sol. The lines run smoothly, and much poetic fervor is lent to each canto. Altogether, it presents a very interesting volume, which is neatly printed, and, though not wholly free from typographical mistakes, will prove a welcome adjunct to modern literature.

*The Interior of Chicago*:—"Sol," an Epic Poem, by Rev. Henry Iliowizi.—This poem is appropriately dedicated to Sir Moses Montefiore, the venerable philanthropist, whose magnificent charities have made him known the world over. It details with fitting accompaniments the sad story of the persecution and tragic death of Sol, a Jewish maiden, who suffered martyrdom in Morocco. Becoming acquainted, during a residence in Morocco, with the circumstances attending the maiden's death, the author then resolved to make it an epic poem. He has accomplished his self-imposed task, after years of assiduous labor, and he now gives the work to the public with a hope that it may lead to a more favorable appreciation of a race whose virtues, he thinks, are their own, while their shortcomings are the natural results of a long, dark, and painful history, for which he holds the Gentile, and not the Jew, responsible. Let that pass. It is certain that Rabbi Iliowizi has given us an epic marked by rare poetic ability—a grand poem which, while felicitously and powerfully portraying the aspirations, the hopes, the sufferings, and the traditions of his own people in connection with the sad end of Sol, the heroic maiden, forcibly appeals to the warm sympathies and kindly feelings of all Christian people. Gentiles and Jews will read this remarkable epic with almost equal pleasure. All admirers of epic poetry will appreciate and enjoy its majestic movement, its vivid descriptions, and its glowing imagery. In a second edition, which must soon be called for, the author promises a correction of some typographical errors which appear in the first. He resides in Minneapolis, Minn.

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# HEROD:

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*Minneapolis Journal*.—Artistically it leaves nothing to be desired, save a little more nicety of phrase, which may be acquired by a study of the best English models of our own day, rather than those of the times of Elizabeth and Queen Anne, when the dramatist was allowed a license not at all permissible at present. The principal personage of the drama is King Herod, whose crimes form one of the darkest passages of history. The gory tragedy, full of treachery and murder, moves inexorably to its final act, the beheading of Mariamne at the command of Herod, who is led to this appalling crime by jealousy. Finding his wife innocent, he recalls his order for her execution, but too late. He then, in despair, seeks to end his own life, but is prevented by his brother Pheroras.

*Jewish Messenger of New York*.—Rev. H. Iliowizi has just published in neat pamphlet form an historic tragedy, "Herod," depicting scenes and characters in that monarch's life. The execution of Queen Mariamne forms the climax. The author has decided literary tastes, and his ambition in choosing to write a tragedy in blank verse is not to be questioned. We discern fair progress in his style. The movement is rapid throughout, and the author wields a strong and picturesque pen.

*The Occident*.—A few weeks ago Rev. Henry Iliowizi, of Minneapolis, Minn., laid on our table his latest work, "Herod," an historic tragedy in five acts. We regret that we were, until now, unable to give our attention to this exceedingly well-written dramatic play. We read this work with interest, and have derived great pleasure from it. The lives of the ambitious, envious, and jealous King Herod, and his gentle, innocent, and unfortunate queen, Mariamne, the descendant of the heroic house of Asmoneus, are rich in tragic events, and the author of "Herod" makes very good use of the historic material. The character of Herod, as well as that of Mariamne—the leading names of the *dramatis personæ*—is very truthfully depicted. The author's imagination is vivid, his language eloquent and highly poetic, except in some of the monologues, where the author endeavors to imitate some of the old English dramatists: attempting to portray the deep agitations of burning passions or overwhelming sufferings in short but striking sentences, it lacks the polish and smoothness of the old masters. But the author is young and highly gifted, and more experience will improve his style. We already notice a decided improvement in his language. "Herod," as well as his previously published poem, "Sol," makes us wish that the young author may continue to employ his brilliant literary talents and poetic ability, for he is sure to find a lofty place in the temple of fame, and his name will yet reflect honor upon his people.

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# JOSEPH:

## A DRAMA.

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*Our Church* :—The author is singularly fortunate in his subject. Probably no Old Testament name suggests more of popular interest and supplies richer material for an amateur drama than that of Jacob's favorite son. The theme loses none of its interest and value in Mr. Iliowizi's hand. We can cordially recommend it to our young people as especially appropriate for a church or Sunday-school entertainment.

*Jewish Messenger* :—Rev. Henry Iliowizi, of Minneapolis, has just published a little work adapted for presentation before Y. M. H. A. audiences. It is entitled "Joseph," a dramatic representation in seven tableaux. It shows care and force in its composition.

*Minneapolis Tribune* :—The Rev. Henry Iliowizi, Rabbi of Minneapolis, well known to the reading public as the author of "Sol," an epic poem, and "Herod," an historical tragedy, has recently published a drama entitled "Joseph." The story of Joseph is told with considerable force and dramatic effect in a series of seven tableaux. It is intended for amateur representation, but is equally interesting for private reading.

*The Jewish Free Press* :—Rev. Henry Iliowizi, the "poet Rabbi" of the Northwest, has sent us a copy of his latest published work, an historical drama entitled "Joseph." In his former productions, "Sol" and "Herod," Mr. Iliowizi displayed poetical ability, and now the flowing lines in "Joseph" give him an undisputed claim for working his favorite style, the epic. The theme, dealing with the sale into slavery of Joseph, the rise to the position of ruler in Egypt, the famine, the remorse of his guilty brothers, and the grand grief of the old patriarch Jacob, is one which affords abundant material for a first-class drama, and that Mr. Iliowizi has made out of it. Evidently it was a labor of love with the "poet Rabbi," this dramatizing of one of the most beautiful events in Jewish history. He seizes upon every incident, and "Joseph" is a veritable canvas-picture, a graceful epic. The work is read on to the end with increasing interest; the chaste language, grave yet simple, unfolding the tale, delights without wearying. Mr. Iliowizi is a successful playwright, and it is hoped that "Joseph" is by no means the last of his dramatic efforts. Taken from the standard of a "working play" we can warmly recommend it to the different Literary and Young Men's Hebrew Associations of the country. The acts are easily set; the chorus, when well trained, and the many tableaux, give rare opportunities for the display of histrionic talent of our young people. There has been too much

struggling after difficult plays, but now that one is put into their hands giving a fine field for the amateur, we would like to see it on the "boards" at our club-houses the coming winter. The characters are historical; the different spoken pieces heroic, and the climax thrilling: all pointing to Henry Iliowizi as a poet of the first order, and a credit to Jewish talent in America.

*Rev. Dr. Felsenthal* of Chicago:—REV. HENRY ILIOWIZI, Minneapolis, Minn.  
DEAR SIR:—This afternoon the postman delivered to me a copy of your new drama, "Joseph," which you so kindly have forwarded to me. Accept my sincere thanks—not only for the copy you have sent me, but also still more so for your enrichment of our Jewish literature, which, until now, was so very poorly represented in the English language. I could only glance over the pages of your drama, but this hasty glance was sufficient to convince me that there is a genuine poetic spirit in my colleague who, as minister, presides over the Jewish congregation in Minneapolis. It shall be a pleasure to me to recommend your book, and I should be pleased once to see your drama performed "*auf den Brettern, die die Welt bedeuten*." From such a pulpit, perhaps, our young people might be reached more effectively than from our Temple pulpits. I remain, dear sir,

Yours respectfully,

B. FELSENTHAL.

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